



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Industry Greats Celebrated during 2019 Canadian Wine Industry Awards

Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON – July 17, 2019 – The Canadian Vintners Association (CVA) is pleased to announce the winners of the 2019 Canadian Wine Industry Awards alongside headline sponsor, MNP. These prestigious awards recognize individuals, organizations and businesses that have gone above and beyond to support and enhance the wine industry in Canada, celebrating the success, leadership and outstanding commitment in Canada's grape wine industry.

The winner of the **Canadian Wine Industry Award of Distinction** - regarded as the highest form of peer recognition in the Canadian wine industry – is Dr. Joseph Andrew Peller and Family. Dr. Peller dedicated 30 years of his adult life to developing Canada's first truly national wine brand, helping develop the wine growing regions in British Columbia, Central and Atlantic Canada. CEO of Andrés Wines (now Andrew Peller Limited) from 1965 until 1995, he displayed exceptional leadership and was an inspiration to his employees, whom he always endeavoured to treat like family. Andrew Peller Limited grew and prospered under Dr. Peller's dedication and leadership.

“For almost 60 years, Dr. Peller and the Peller family have exemplified a strong commitment and leadership towards the pursuit of Canadian wine excellence,” said Dan Paszkowski, President and CEO of the Canadian Vintners Association. “This award is a testament to the Peller families’ sense of community, vision and dedication to growing the Canadian wine industry into a region whose exceptional quality wines can stand alongside the best in the world.”

The **Wine Industry Champion Award**, presented to an individual who has provided exemplary support to the Canadian wine industry through media, research, policy or advocacy, was awarded to Laurie Macdonald, Executive Director of VQA Ontario. Laurie has been with VQA Ontario since its inception in 2000 and seen the Ontario wine industry establish an international presence and more than triple in size. VQA Ontario administers the Vintners Quality Alliance Act and associated regulations that establish an appellation of origin and quality assurance system for Ontario VQA wines. VQA certification and branding provides consumers with label integrity and the industry with a foundation to build consumer confidence in local wines.

“The CVA is thrilled to honour Laurie’s exceptional and ongoing contribution towards building and administering a world class wine appellation system,” stated Paszkowski. “Through hard work and leadership, Laurie’s dedication to Ontario’s appellations and wines of origin has provided consumers the reassurance of standards, quality and integrity in every bottle of Ontario VQA wine.”

The Karl Kaiser Canadian Winemaker Award was created in 2018 to celebrate great Canadian winemakers, in honour of the legacy of the late Karl Kaiser, a Canadian wine industry pioneer and viticultural visionary. The recipient of this year’s award was Craig McDonald, winemaker at Wayne Gretzky Estates, Ontario.

“With a keen sense of marrying the art of winemaking with the business of wine, award winning Craig McDonald is a deserving recipient of CVA’s second annual Karl Kaiser Canadian Winemaker Award, said Dan Paszkowski. From Wayne Gretzky in Ontario to Sandhill in British Columbia, Craig oversees all wineries in the Peller family, and his talents are demonstrated through the wines many Canadians have come to love and enjoy,” remarked Paszkowski.

The awards were presented on July 17, 2019, following the CVA’s 52st Annual Meeting, which brought together winery owners from across Canada to hear from a panel of speakers, presenting on retail opportunities and market trends in the industry.

Background

Canadian Wine Industry Award of Distinction

The recipient of the 2019 Award of Distinction is the late Dr. Joseph Andrew Peller and Family.

Dr. Peller was CEO of the then-called Andrés Wines (now Andrew Peller Limited) for 30 years, from 1965 until 1995, and President for almost as long, from 1965 until 1993. Dr. Peller created Canada’s first truly national brand and helped develop the wine growing regions in BC, central and Atlantic Canada.

Dr. Peller valued education, having a degree in medicine himself and having continued to be a prolific reader until his death in 2016. As such, one of the philanthropic initiatives he undertook was the mentorship of many young people, through scholarships as well as general career support and guidance. He was an inspiring leader of Andrew Peller Limited, and always endeavored to treat his employees like family. He was well respected by growers and colleagues alike and was a compassionate family business owner and an extremely proud Canadian. In addition to his unceasing work to grow Canadian wine as an industry, he also served on the board of social policy organizations. Dr. Peller died on his 90th birthday in March 2016, and left a legacy of love for family and loyalty not only to friends but employees and his beloved winery.

Canadian Wine Industry Champion Award

The recipient of the 2019 Wine Industry Champion Award is Laurie Macdonald.

Laurie Macdonald was hired in January 2000 as Executive Director of VQA Ontario and the Ontario VQA regulations were proclaimed in June 2000 and became operational. In the 17 years she has been at the helm, the Ontario wine industry has been substantially transformed and much of this has been due to her tireless efforts. She has seen the growth of VQA producers rise from 44 to over 170 today and an increase the number of regulated appellations and sub-appellations from 4 to 16. Her expertise is in high demand outside Ontario's border. She provided guidance to British Columbia as they created their own BCVQA regulations and played a key role in the creation of Canadian Vintners Guidance Document distributed to non-VQA regulated provinces. She is an educator, protector and champion of 100% VQA wines.

The Karl Kaiser Canadian Winemaker Award

The recipient of the 2019 The Karl Kaiser Canadian Winemaker Award is Craig McDonald.

Craig McDonald has nearly three decades of winemaking experience, having made wines all over the world, including in the US, Australia and New Zealand. But it's in Canada where he has spent the majority of his winemaking career, dedicating himself to making excellent wine in Niagara, while managing a team of over 20 winemakers across a range of wineries in both Ontario and British Columbia.

A passionate believer that winemaking starts in the vineyard, he has devoted the last 20 vintages to creating award-winning VQA wines. He has honed his craft not only as the founding winemaker at Wayne Gretzky Estates, but also as lead winemaker at Trius Winery, and prior to that at Creekside Estate Winery.

About the Canadian Vintners Association

The Canadian Vintners Association (CVA) is the national voice of the Canadian wine industry, representing more than 90% of annual wine production. CVA members are engaged in the entire wine value chain from grape growing, farm management, grape harvesting, research, wine production, bottling, retail sales and tourism.

www.canadianvintners.com

About MNP

MNP is a leading national accounting, tax and business consulting firm in Canada. Through partner-led engagements, MNP provides a collaborative, cost-effective approach to doing business and personalized strategies to help organizations succeed in Canada and internationally, and has an extensive history of working with food and beverage processors.

Media Contact:

Asha Hingorani
Director of Government and Public Affairs
Canadian Vintners Association
(613) 462-7080
Asha@canadianvintners.com