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Oregon Wine Industry Leaders Honored at Oregon Wine Symposium Luncheon

Oregon Wine A-List Wine Program of the Year, Lifetime Achievement, Founders, Vineyard Excellence, Outstanding Industry Service and Industry Partner Award Recipients Named

PORTLAND — Feb. 25, 2016 — The Oregon Wine Board (OWB) recognized the industry’s most esteemed leaders on Feb. 25 at the Oregon Wine Industry Awards Luncheon, a new component of the Oregon Wine Symposium. Six awards were presented to industry members who have demonstrated a sustained and enduring commitment to advancing Oregon’s wine community. The honorees were nominated by their peers for their extraordinary contributions.

“The collaborative spirit and individual commitment from passionate members of our community has always been at the core of the Oregon wine industry,” said David Beck, chairman of the Oregon Wine Board. “It is a great honor to acknowledge these exceptional individuals who have poured countless hours into the advancement and success of Oregon wines.”

The **Oregon Wine A-List Wine Program of the Year Award** is the highest honor awarded by the [Oregon Wine A-List restaurant awards program](#). It recognizes a wine program director who demonstrates a passionate devotion to Oregon wine by representing the vast diversity of fine wine produced across the state and going above and beyond to offer deep selections of unique wine, vintage verticals, impressive regional assortments and staff education. This year’s honoree is James Rahn of The Heathman Restaurant and Bar. James has focused over the past three years on creating a wine program that spotlights single-vineyard and small production wines from some of Oregon’s premier producers, matching the restaurant’s farm to table approach. His dedication to and belief in Oregon’s small, independent producers making exceptional wines helps elevate the Oregon wine experience among his clientele.

The **Lifetime Achievement Award** celebrates people whose work has been both inspiring and transformative. The late Cole Danehower was a rare gem that shined and illuminated Oregon’s wine community. He was thoughtful, inspiring, dedicated and above all, a passionate evangelist for Oregon and the wines crafted here. Few have been as recognized around the world for championing Oregon wine so effectively and consistently. Cole’s absence was immediately felt in the Oregon wine community and he is continuously missed.

The **Founders Award** honors people whose longtime work in and for the industry has positively affected the direction and accomplishments of Oregon wine, and whose personal efforts have helped foster cooperation among growers and winemakers. Early on, Oregon’s ability to produce wines of exceptional quality was not as widely known as it is today. So, in 1987, when the highly respected Drouhin family of Burgundy purchased 100 acres in the Dundee Hills, it was a landmark event for our young industry that cemented Oregon’s place among the most esteemed regions in the world. For nearly 30 years, the Drouhin family has

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continued to raise the bar for the quality of wines produced in Oregon and contributed significantly to our collective ability to garner international acclaim.

The **Vineyard Excellence Award** is given to vineyard professionals representing three areas of the state, each of whom demonstrates outstanding collaborative support under the supervision of vineyard managers, directors and viticulturists. These employees exemplify remarkable technical knowledge, professionalism and an outstanding work ethic. Jesse Lopez has worked at Celestina Vineyards in Southern Oregon for six years. During this time, Jesse has not only become an invaluable member of the team, but also a leader who is relied on to direct and supervise other employees. Efren Loeza began working at Tualatin Estates in 1979 and, through its merger with Willamette Valley Vineyards in 1997, now holds the distinction of working in the vineyards longer than the winery founder, Jim Bernau. As vineyard manager for all of the vines at Willamette Valley Vineyards, Efren has nearly 300 acres under his supervision. Most recently, he was instrumental in planting 80 acres at the Ingram Estate Vineyard adjacent to the Elton Vineyard. Irineo Magana joined Phelps Creek Vineyards in the Columbia Gorge more than 20 years ago. When Irineo started, Phelps Creek farmed only seven acres of estate wines. Today, through his hard labor and leadership he oversees more than 50 acres of grapes on both sides of the Columbia River. Under his careful nurturing of the fields, Phelps Creek fruit produces wine routinely scoring high marks by professional wine critics.

The **Outstanding Industry Service Award** is given to an individual who has shown exemplary commitment, leadership and service to the industry. Jason Tosch is a long time passionate spokesperson for the virtues and economic benefits of sustainable farming practices. He has been a solid supporter of Oregon wine research initiatives and has served on state research and education boards for more than five years. Jason continues to donate much of his time and knowledge advocating for growing grapes of exceptional quality that exemplify the complicated relationship between, site, soil and vine.

The **Industry Partner Award** is given to a vendor or service provider of the Oregon wine industry who in the course of doing business has significantly assisted in the growth and success of our industry and its members. Matt and Julie Pihl of Pihl Excavating are recognized for their personal and corporate commitment to Oregon's grape growers and winemakers, helping them fulfill their dreams and advance the interests of Oregon viticulture and enology since the company's inception in 1996. For 20 years, the Pihls have worked alongside members of our wine community to ensure the vineyards and wineries they serve have the proper foundation for producing the highest quality grapes and wines possible.

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About the Oregon Wine Board:

The Oregon Wine Board is a semi-independent Oregon state agency managing marketing, research, and education initiatives that support and advance the Oregon wine and wine grape industry. The Board works on behalf of all Oregon wineries and independent growers throughout the state's diverse winegrowing regions. To learn more, visit industry.oregonwine.org

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