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*For immediate release*

## **Wine Enthusiast Magazine Announces the Top Ten: Winners of the 2007 Wine Star Awards**

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*And the winners are...*

- **Man of the Year: Ray Chadwick, Diageo Chateau & Estate Wines**
- **American Winery of the Year: DFV Wines (Delicato Family Vineyards)**
- **European Winery of the Year: Symington Family Estates, Portugal**
- **New World Winery of the Year: Villa Maria, New Zealand**
- **Winemaker of the Year: Carlo Ferrini, Italy**
- **Importer of the Year: E & J Gallo Winery**
- **Distiller of the Year: Casa Herradura, Brown-Forman**
- **Retailer of the Year: Whole Foods Market**
- **Wine Region of the Year: Rioja, Spain**
- **Lifetime Achievement: John Mariani, Banfi Vintners**

**Wine Enthusiast** is pleased to announce the winners of its **Annual Wine Star Awards for 2007**, recognizing excellence in the wine and spirits industry. Feature articles on each of the winners appear in the December 15<sup>th</sup> Special Annual Awards issue, published on November 12<sup>th</sup>. The recipients will be honored at a gala dinner and awards ceremony at the New York Public Library on Monday January 28,

2008. [Click here](#) for information on attending the awards dinner.

Winners were selected for their outstanding contributions to the world of wine and spirits, with special attention given to achievements in the year 2007. This year, the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to Dr. John Mariani of Banfi Vintners.

We offer heartiest congratulations to this year's winners, and invite you to read the briefings below, to see why they are truly deserving.

### **Man of the Year: Ray Chadwick**

Ray Chadwick has been in the wine business for over 30 years, having joined Seagram in 1974. In 2001, when Diageo acquired Seagram, Chadwick was named President of Diageo Chateau & Estate Wines (DC&E), a position he holds today. During that tenure, Chadwick has overseen tremendous growth at DC&E, launching new brands from California, Australia, New Zealand and France, growing its wine portfolio from three brands to 21, and focusing on premium wines. DC&E's strong California portfolio includes Beaulieu Vineyard, Sterling Vineyards, Acacia and Chalone. In the last year, it launched Newharbor (NZ), B&G Bistro (France), Beauzeaux (CA) and A by Acacia (CA). Under Ray's leadership, DC&E began fiscal 2007 as the No. 4 premium wine company in the United States (8.7% market share), and finished the year at No. 3, with a 9% market share. With sales of 5 million cases a year, at a retail value of \$1 billion, DC&E is one of the 10 biggest U.S. wine companies. But beyond the astonishing numbers, Chadwick has helped build an engaged and dedicated team. As an insightful strategist and superb administrator, he has repeatedly met and mastered an enormous challenge: to bring together different corporate cultures, successfully merging Diageo, Seagram's, and finally Chalone, providing a collaborative and winning environment.

### **American Winery of the Year: DFV Wines (Delicato Family Vineyards)**

DFV Wines is a family-owned winery committed to its 80-plus-year wine heritage in California. Three generations of the Indelicato family have overseen vineyard operations and winemaking, and produce a portfolio of wine brands from their

various properties. Originally a top quality supplier of grapes and bulk wine, in the 1990s they moved into bottled varietals; they currently offer 9 different brands, which appeal to a wide range of consumers. In the late 1980s, the family purchased the 12,000-acre San Bernabé Vineyard in Monterey, and in the 1990s they added Clay Station vineyard in Lodi, and North Coast vineyards in Napa and Sonoma. The Indelicato family has earned a reputation for maintaining the highest standards in farming, with an unwavering dedication to environmentally sensitive winegrowing practices and economically sustainable business practices. Individual wines that have gained recognition in recent years include Gnarly Head Zinfandel, Clay Station Viognier, Irony Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, 337 Cabernet Sauvignon and Delicato Shiraz. DFV Wines answers consumer demand for great tasting, mindfully grown, intelligently vinified wines for every occasion.

### **European Winery of the Year: Symington Family Estates**

Symington Family Estates is the leading producer of premium-quality Port. Their portfolio includes eight Port brands (including Dow's, Warre's, Quinta do Vesuvio and Smith Woodhouse), a small but significant range of table wines, and ownership of 4,400 acres of vineyards. The family is also the largest producer of Madeira. Possessed of tremendous business acumen, one of the family's strategic investments was to set up their own distribution companies in major markets. Premium Port Wines, based in San Francisco, is the only specialized importer and marketer of Port, Madeira and Douro table wine in the U.S. Six members of the Symington family are currently engaged in the management of the company, representing the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> generations in the Port trade, dating back over 350 years.

### **New World Winery of the Year: Villa Maria**

Villa Maria is one of New Zealand's leading wineries. It was founded in 1961 by its current owner and Managing Director, George Fistonich, and is 100-percent New Zealand—and family—owned. The company's primary focus is on the vineyards themselves, to produce the highest possible grape quality, while respecting the importance of regional differences. Astute site selection is followed by superior vineyard management and then complemented by expert winemaking. Villa Maria is

also known for its innovations in its native country: a tiered system of payment for grape growers based on the fruit quality and the creation of reserve and single-vineyard wines. Under Fistonich's leadership, Villa Maria also became the first major wine company in the world to declare its wineries "cork free," opting for screw cap closures on all of its wines. Through his ceaseless pursuit of quality, Fistonich and Villa Maria have made outstanding contributions not only to New Zealand wines, but also to the wine world in general.

### **Winemaker of the Year: Carlo Ferrini, Italy**

A native of Florence, Italy, Carlo Ferrini is possessed of a natural talent for winemaking. He graduated from college in 1978 with a degree in agriculture and immediately began working for the Consorzio Vino Chianti Classico. For more than 10 years, he provided technical assistance to many wineries in the Chianti Classico region, while honing his expertise in viticulture. As a result of these experiences, Carlo created and implemented the unique project, "Chianti Classico 2000", consisting of experimentation and research in viticulture. This experience contributed profoundly to his understanding of specially selected Sangiovese clones, and consequently helped make him one of today's most well-known experts on Sangiovese. In 1992, he began his career as a consultant, working for estates across Italy, from Trentino in the north to Sicily, producing wines that are not only distinctively Italian but also distinctively regional; he has enormous respect for each winery's specific traditions, varieties, climates and personalities. He currently consults for approximately 40 estates in Trentino, Friuli, Abruzzo, Sicily and Puglia, as well as Tuscany. As his clients attest, he is true both to the territory and to tradition, with special attention to grape quality.

### **Importer of the Year: E & J Gallo Winery**

Although most people know that E&J Gallo is probably the biggest winery in America, very few realize its role as an importer. In a remarkably short span of time—the past ten years—this company has managed to build an impressive portfolio of brands. The importing side of the business began in 1997 with Ecco Domani Pinot Grigio from Italy, a company which Gallo started from scratch. It was one of Ernest Gallo's ideas, and a fairly radical one, considering the company's

exclusive focus up to that point on California wines. The company currently imports 15 brands from 11 wineries in nine countries: France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Chile, Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Of these, seven were created, while the other eight represent partnerships. The company's impressive growth rate for imports has been 27% per year over the last five years. Primarily under the leadership of Joseph Gallo, Ernest's son, E&J Gallo plans to continue to expand its portfolio of imported wines based on their understanding of consumer tastes, and their on-going commitment to offer wines that deliver both high value and high quality.

### **Distiller of the Year: Casa Herradura**

Casa Herradura is one of the oldest and most respected producers of Tequila. Founded by Ambrosio Rosales and Aurelio Lopez in 1870, Casa Herradura is a Mexican treasure that, many believe, delivers the world's highest quality, most authentic Tequila experience because of its expertise and leadership. Produced in Jalisco, in the heart of Mexico's Tequila region, Tequila Herradura is 100-percent blue agave Tequila, carefully crafted using traditional methods, such as cooking the agave in clay ovens and fermenting naturally with wild yeast. Tequila Herradura is all natural, estate grown and estate bottled. Renowned for being the Tequila industry's foremost innovator, Tequila Herradura introduced the first Reposado Tequila in 1974, and later launched the first Extra Añejo, Selección Suprema. In 1994, Casa Herradura launched El Jimador Tequila to honor the men who harvest agave plants, and today, El Jimador is the No. 1 Tequila in Mexico. Herradura has earned the respect of the industry, not only for its huge impact on the growth of the Tequila category, but also for its 130-year dedication to producing 100% blue agave Tequila of the highest quality, staying true to its three core principles of quality, tradition and history. Purchased in January 2007 by Brown-Forman of Louisville, Kentucky, a company that has the highest respect for quality and tradition, expect Casa Herradura to prosper despite the change in ownership.

### **Retailer of the Year: Whole Foods**

Founded in 1980 in Austin, Texas, Whole Foods Market is the world's leading natural and organic foods supermarket and America's first national certified organic grocer.

In fiscal year 2006, the company had sales of \$5.6 billion and currently has more than 270 stores in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. In an attempt to change the face of wine purchasing and merchandising within the supermarket format, Whole Foods Market has taken its wine departments to an exciting new level, by making them a destination for current and new shoppers with outstanding customer service and incredible variety, quality and price. From wine-tasting stations and enomatic wine serving systems to inviting department design and layout and creative signage that includes complementary food pairings, Whole Foods Market's wine departments successfully showcase wine in a grocery store setting. At its new Potero Hill store in San Francisco, there is even a Market Bistro, the first of its kind. Its commitment to wine promotion is reflected in its numbers: Over the past few years, wine sales have grown faster than overall sales.

### **Wine Region of the Year: Rioja, Spain**

Rioja is the leading wine region of Spain, where vine growing and winemaking have been local traditions since medieval times. A beautiful area, offering varied and rugged landscapes, Rioja's climate is ideal for grape-growing. Although Rioja's winemaking history goes back centuries, and benefits from hundreds of years of experience and innovation, it is currently undergoing a stylistic revolution—or, as winemakers prefer—an “evolution.” Until the 1980s, Rioja wines were usually aged for long periods in American oak barrels, acquiring complex but delicate aromas of dried fruit, leather and spice, while the current style emphasizes fresh fruit and firm structure, using new French or American oak barrels. Encompassing just over 150,000 planted acres, Rioja was promoted to DOC in 1991, and recently has scaled new heights in the production of world-class wines. Due to heavy investment, there has been an increase in advanced technology, and a huge growth in quality. It is rich in history and traditions, but willing to adapt to modern times. It is no longer a one-product, one-style region, and, in advancing itself on the international wine map, it has done the same for Spain.

### **Lifetime Achievement: Dr. John F. Mariani**

In the 1950s, John Mariani and his brother Harry expanded their father's Italian import portfolio to Germany, Switzerland and France, becoming a leading Bordeaux and Burgundy négociant in the 1960s. It was in 1969, however, that John launched

their first marketing phenomenon: the immediately and immensely popular Riunite Lambrusco. This remarkable Italian wine became the country's No. 1 import, a position it held for 26 years. In the 1970s, to enhance the quality and reputation of Italian wines, John planted vineyards and built cellars in southern Tuscany. His work ultimately inspired a renaissance in Tuscan winemaking, helping to elevate Montalcino from one of Tuscany's poorest villages to the heights it enjoys today, earning him a knighthood from the Italian government. The success of Riunite was repeated in the 1980s, when Banfi's new import, Chile's Concha y Toro, jumped from 90,000 cases to 2 million, becoming the country's new No. 1 import. In the 1990s, John and Harry were joined in the management of the company by John's daughter, Cristina and Harry's son, James. And in the 2000s, having created wines that were low in sulfites and histamines, Banfi was recognized for its environmental, ethical and social responsibility. Through John's vision and leadership, Banfi has also carried out clonal research on Sangiovese, and is pioneering hybrid steel-and-wood fermenters in its winery. Beyond his tremendous insights, making Banfi a model of wine production and marketing, John has also made Banfi a leader in humanitarian efforts, contributing for several decades and on several continents to causes from education and health to disaster relief. His vision and the implementation of it have helped to raise the quality of the world's wines, and to bring them into American homes and restaurants.

For Wine Star Awards Dinner [information and to purchase tickets](#),  
contact Heather Frank,  
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**About *Wine Enthusiast Magazine***

Founded in 1988, *Wine Enthusiast Magazine's* mission is to educate and entertain readers about wine and the wine lifestyle in an accessible and user-friendly way. *Wine Enthusiast Magazine* has grown to become one of the world's most respected and quoted publications in the field of wine and spirits. The magazine is an important source of ratings and reviews of both wine and spirits currently available in the marketplace, vital to both consumers and to the trade. With a readership of 500,000 per issue, *Wine Enthusiast Magazine* is available in fine wine shops, tasting rooms and major bookstores nationwide. In addition, Wine Enthusiast Magazine develops signature events for both consumers and the trade. The magazine and "Buying Guide" are also available online at [www.wineenthusiast.com/mag](http://www.wineenthusiast.com/mag)

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