

# 4<sup>TH</sup> U.S. SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING SUMMIT

MAY 6-7, 2026

EVENT PROGRAM

WALLA WALLA, WA

FIND MORE DETAILS AT

[sustainablewinegrowing.us/2026summit](https://sustainablewinegrowing.us/2026summit)



## About the Summit

The U.S. Sustainable Winegrowing Summit is part of a collaboration between the California Association of Winegrape Growers, California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance, LIVE, Oregon Wine, New York Wine & Grape Foundation, Washington State Wine, Washington Winegrowers and California Wine Institute. These U.S. wine organizations are partnering to ensure a sustainable future by promoting sustainable winegrowing and communicating about the industry's commitment to sustainability.

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## SUMMIT HOSTS



## Day 1: Agenda

Wednesday, May 6, 2026 | 12:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

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### 12:30 p.m. - 12:50 p.m. | Check in for the Sustainable Vineyard & Winery Tour

Please check in at the registration table outside the Marcus Whitman Hotel Ballroom. The bus will return to the Marcus Whitman Hotel after dinner at 9:30 p.m. You are welcome to leave a bag/personal items on the bus during the tasting and dinner if needed.

### 1 p.m. - 5:45 p.m. | Sustainable Vineyard & Winery Tour

Tour bus begins at the Marcus Whitman Hotel & Conference Center, visits Seven Hills Vineyard, Ferguson Vineyard and Les Collines Vineyard and ends with a tour of Echolands Winery. During your stop at Ferguson Vineyard, you'll enjoy L'Ecole No 41 wines in the vineyard where they're grown. Bus returns guests to the Marcus Whitman after dinner.

Speakers introduced by Heather Bradshaw, Communications Director, Washington State Wine Commission

#### Speakers:

- Seven Hills & Ferguson: Sadie Drury, General Manager & Viticulturist
- Les Collines Vineyard: Brad Sorensen, Vineyard Manager & Viticulturist
- Echolands Winery: Brian Rudin, Winemaker & General Manager & Doug Frost, CEO

Wear layers and comfortable, closed-toed shoes that are appropriate for the vineyard/winery tour. You may be asked to clean the bottom of your shoes with a bleach solution to prevent the spread of pests. Walking over the bleach mats is unlikely to impact your shoes. We will be away from the hotel until our return from dinner at Echolands Winery (~9:30 p.m.). Please bring sun protection and water.

### 5:45 p.m. - 7:15 p.m. | Summit Walk-Around Wine Tasting & Reception at Echolands Winery

Join us for a unique tasting opportunity of U.S. sustainably produced wines from California, Washington, Oregon, New York and other states – and a welcome reception. Discover wineries leading the way in sustainable practices – each sharing their unique approach to building a more sustainable wine industry. From innovative packaging to reduce their winery's carbon footprint to habitat management in the vineyard, a wide array of practices will be featured. This is an excellent opportunity to taste, compare and connect with fellow sustainable wine professionals while exploring practical packaging and sustainability innovations that are shaping the industry's future.

If you are planning to arrive directly to Echolands Winery, please note that they will be doing some light road work the week of the event. In/out access to the winery will be restricted to one-lane traffic on a gravel road. Please be mindful of the flaggers controlling traffic, drive slowly over the transitions from concrete to gravel and expect minor delays on the way in and out.

## Day 1: Agenda, Cont'd

Wednesday, May 6, 2026 | 12:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

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7 p.m. | Welcome Dinner & Keynote Address

Keynote Speaker:

- Erin Fitzgerald, Strategic Advisor & Founder, Fitzgerald Consulting

9:15 p.m. | Bus Departs Echolands to Marcus Whitman

## Day 2 Agenda

Thursday, May 7, 2026

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8:30 a.m. | Registration opens in Marcus Whitman Hotel & Conference Center Ballroom

9 a.m. - 12 p.m. | Morning Sessions

9 a.m. | Welcome & Opening Remarks

Speakers:

- Kristina Kelley, Executive Director, Washington State Wine Commission
- Lisa Francioni, Deputy Director, California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance



## Day 2 Agenda Cont'd

Thursday, May 7, 2026

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### 9:10 a.m. | Meeting Market Demand Through Sustainable Wine Packaging & Certification

Sustainability and packaging are increasingly important considerations in wine supply chains. Market trends around lighter-weight bottles, alternative formats and reduced carbon footprints are fundamentally changing how wineries approach packaging and sustainability strategies. In this session, learn about marketplace expectations for wine suppliers and winery perspectives on responding to these market trends through their packaging and sustainability decisions. Learn how certifications and climate commitments influence purchasing decisions and gain practical insights on positioning your winery to succeed in today's sustainability-conscious marketplace.

Panel introduced by Lisa Francioni, Deputy Director, California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance.

#### Speakers:

- Cyril Penn, Editor-in-Chief, Wine Business Monthly (Moderator)
  - Herb Quady, President, Quady North
  - JJ Williams, General Manager, Kiona Vineyards & Winery
  - Sylvia Bronson, Chief Marketing Officer, Scheid Family Wines
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### 10:10 a.m. | Effectively Communicating Your Sustainability Story

Gain insights into how to integrate sustainability into your communications and learn what makes sustainability messaging resonate with consumers and trade. Discover proven strategies that can transform how you share your sustainability story with authenticity and impact.

Speaker introduced by Gina Bianco, Executive Director, Oregon Wine Board.

#### Speaker:

Courtney Cochran, Principal, STUDIO SOIF

Break | 10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.

## Day 2 Agenda, Cont'd | Thursday, May 7, 2026

### 10:45 am | From Intention to Impact: Climate Action Strategy & Implementation for Vineyards & Wineries

Climate change demands climate action — but getting started can be overwhelming. This panel brings together experts who will provide insights on how to integrate climate action planning into your business and share tips on how to move from climate commitment to concrete action. Gain insights into prioritizing initiatives, measuring impact and building a climate action roadmap that aligns with your operational realities and business goals.

Panel introduced by Chris Serra, Executive Director, LIVE.

#### Speakers:

- Aaron Schreiber-Stainthorp, Strategic Sustainability Consultant, Sustainability Squared (Moderator)
- Ariel Daly, Vineyard Manager, Adelsheim Vineyard
- Dave Pittard, Owner, Buttonwood Grove Winery & Six Eighty Cellars
- Ryan Johnson, Director of Marketing, Ridge Vineyards

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### 11:45 a.m. | Lunch with Optional Roundtable Discussions

Enjoy lunch while connecting with peers through optional, informal roundtable discussions on key sustainability topics. Participants may join a facilitated discussion of interest, or choose an open table to relax, network and reconnect with colleagues.

- **Alternative Packaging and Tackling Scope 3 Emissions**, Aaron Schreiber-Stainthorp, Strategic Sustainability Consultant, Sustainability Squared
- **Common Research Priorities for a Sustainable Future**, Donnell Brown, President, National Grape Research Alliance
- **Communicating Sustainability: Sharing Insights and Lessons Learned**, Mackenzie Pedersen, Senior Marketing Manager & Heather Bradshaw, Communications Director, Washington State Wine Commission
- **Creative Partnerships: Enhancing Collaboration Opportunities Between Industry and Community Partners**, Martin Fujishin, Director of College Cellars & the Enology & Viticulture Program, Walla Walla Community College
- **Dry Farming Winegrapes**, Lauren Pesch, Dry Farmer & Consultant, Chavez & Leeds Vineyards
- **Regenerative Viticulture and the One Block Challenge**, Colleen Myles, Professor, Geography & Environmental Studies, Texas State University
- **Sustainability Certification Programs: Benefits, Challenges and Opportunities**, Justin Jackson, New York Sustainable Winegrowing Program Manager, New York Wine & Grape Foundation

## Day 2 Agenda Cont'd | Thursday, May 7, 2026

### 1:15 p.m. — Using Dry Farming Techniques for Climate Resilience

While dry farming (not using irrigation after the vines are established) is not suitable for every vineyard, reduced water availability will be one of the most significant climate change challenges faced by many winegrowing areas. This discussion will provide background on dry farming practices that can help vineyards become more drought resilient and share recent research results on dry farming practices and soil health.

Speaker introduced by Lisa Francioni, Deputy Director, California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance.

#### Speaker:

- Lauren Pesch, Dry Farmer, Consultant & CSWA Dry Farm Project Manager

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### 1:35 p.m. — Attracting & Retaining the Next Generation of Wine Professionals

Social sustainability includes how businesses interact with people, including employees, customers and communities. This panel explores multiple pathways for developing the next generation of wine industry professionals, including mentorship programs, educational programs and succession planning. Hear from industry leaders about fostering talent, connecting with mentorship programs in your area and building frameworks that cultivate long-term careers in wine.

Panel introduced by Mackenzie Pedersen, Senior Marketing Manager, Washington State Wine Commission

#### Speakers:

- Alyson LaVarnway, Founder & Owner, The Osprey
- Ashley Trout, Owner & Winemaker, Vital Wines
- Devyani Gupta, Head Winemaker & Viticulturist, Valdemar Estates
- Jean Dodson Peterson, Ph.D., Chair of Viticulture & Enology, Washington State University (Moderator)
- Kristin Belair, Director of Winegrowing & Sustainability, Honig Vineyard & Winery



## Day 2 Agenda Overview Cont'd | Thursday, May 7, 2026

2:35 p.m. – Break

### 2:50 p.m. – Technology Solutions for Sustainable, Climate-Resilient Winegrowing

As climate change reshapes growing conditions, technology offers critical tools for adaptation and resilience. Discover practical technological solutions accessible to vineyards and wineries of all sizes. Through real-world case studies, explore tools for water efficiency, canopy management, and precision agriculture being implemented today. Examine the use of artificial intelligence and the evolving role of data in sustainable agriculture – and learn how technology can help you work more efficiently while reducing environmental impact.

Panel introduced by Justin Jackson, New York Sustainable Winegrowing Program Manager, New York Wine & Grape Foundation.

#### Speaker:

- Caine Thompson, General Manager, US, Saga Robotics (Moderator)
- David Markel, Research and Development Manager, Willamette Valley Vineyards
- Matt Doyle, Owner, Doyle Vineyard Management
- Kade Casciato, Manager and Viticulturist, Ciel du Cheval

3:50 p.m. | Wrap Up

4:00 p.m. | Adjourn

### 4:00 pm - 5:30 p.m. | Optional Social Mixer

Join us for networking, wine and charcuterie in the Marcus Whitman Ballroom Foyer. Relax and connect with fellow attendees.



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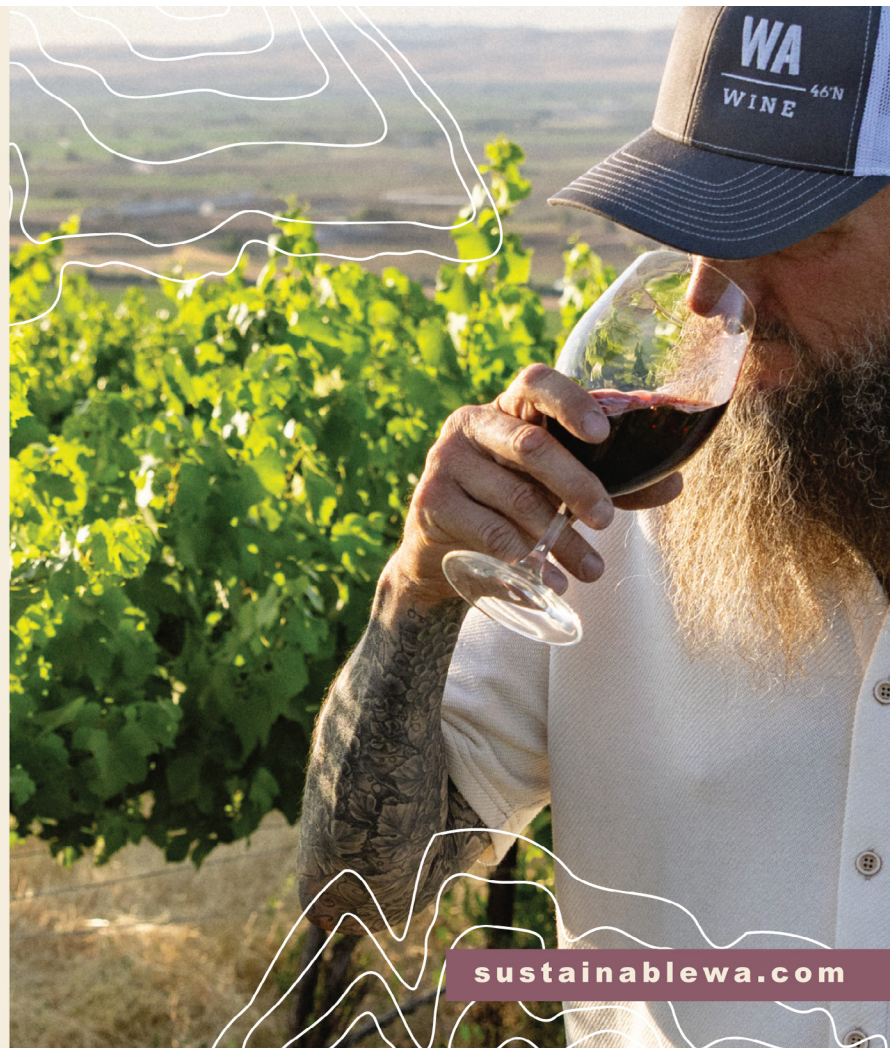
# TAKING CARE OF THIS PLACE IS IN OUR NATURE.

We love this place. Which is why we've established SUSTAINABLE WA, a best-in-class program specifically tailored to the vineyards of Washington.

It's our deep connection to this land that drives us to adapt, innovate, and meet the challenges of a changing climate with care and purpose.

**SUSTAINABLE WA**

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NGRA is a nonprofit membership organization that actualizes research for all sectors and all regions of the American grape and wine industry, spanning wine, table grapes, juice and raisins, nationwide. We connect industry, academic scientists, and federal and state research agencies to initiate novel research projects and programs to solve industry challenges together. Since our founding in 2005, we've been instrumental in securing \$65 million in funding for scientific solutions to grape and wine industry issues.

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## SUMMIT SPEAKERS



### **Kristin Belair**

*Director of Winegrowing & Sustainability, Honig Vineyard & Winery*

After obtaining a winemaking degree from UC Davis in 1981, Kristin began her Napa Valley winemaking journey in Napa Valley. 1998 was the start of her winemaking adventure with the Honig family at Honig Vineyard and Winery. Over the last 28 years, Kristin and her team have created a legacy of 90+ point wines and recognition for Honig as a leader in sustainability. At the beginning of 2023, her position transformed to Winemaker Emeritus, Director of Winegrowing and Sustainability, turning over the winemaking reins to Ashley Egelhoff. While continuing to support winemaking, Kristin's primary focus is on grower relations and expanding Honig's sustainability program.



### **Sylvia Bronson**

*Chief Marketing Officer, Scheid Family Wines*

Sylvia Bronson is Chief Marketing Officer at Scheid Family Wines, where she leads global brand strategy, innovation and commercialization for a growing portfolio of estate-driven, certified sustainable wines. With nearly two decades of experience across wine and spirits, Sylvia thrives at the intersection of brand building, data-driven growth, and sustainable business practices. She began her career at E. & J. Gallo Winery and went on to hold multiple leadership roles at Constellation Brands, including Global Marketing Director for the Imports division and head of Innovation Commercialization, where she launched and scaled both wine and spirits brands. She later served as Head of Marketing at Bently Heritage Estate Distillery, expanding her expertise into craft spirits and estate production. At Scheid Family Wines, Sylvia has been instrumental in developing long-term strategic planning, advancing innovation pipelines and integrating data and technology to drive smarter, more sustainable growth. Her work reflects a commitment to building brands that balance commercial success with environmental stewardship and evolving consumer expectations. In 2025, she was named a Wine Industry Leader by Wine Business Monthly, recognized for her strategic vision, collaborative spirit, clarity, momentum and results. Sylvia holds an MBA from UCLA Anderson School of Management and is WSET Level 2 certified in both wine and spirits. She lives in the Lake Tahoe area with her family; in her spare time, Sylvia can be found skiing in the winter and trail running or stand-up paddle boarding in the summer.

## SUMMIT SPEAKERS



### **Kade Casciato**

*Manager & Viticulturist, Ciel du Cheval*

Kade Casciato brings a deep-rooted passion for the land and a rigorous academic background to the Washington wine industry. Raised in the agricultural and forestry-based communities of Wyoming and Northeast Oregon, Kade's connection to the outdoors was innate, leading him to a career where viticulture truly "chose" him. He holds both a B.S. in Viticulture & Enology and an M.S. in Agriculture from Washington State University. This technical expertise is paired with a strong commitment to industry service; Kade serves as a Board Member for the Washington Wine Commission, a member of the Washington Wine Research Advisory Committee and a member of the Washington Wine Industry Foundation Scholarship Committee. When he isn't in the vineyard, Kade is likely found on a river fishing or on a mountain peak. Drawing on a professional background in industrial and custom home building, he also continues to enjoy construction and design as a personal hobby.



### **Courtney Cochran**

*Principal, STUDIO SOIF*

Courtney Cochran is an expert in marketing narratives for extensive expertise in marketing and impact communications, including building compelling narratives around vanguard sustainability claims and certifications such as B Corp, Regenerative Organic Certification and Climate Neutral. Prior to founding STUDIO SOIF, a purpose-brand communications agency, Cochran led brand and communications at The EVERY Company, a Series C B2B climate-tech startup pioneering low-emission, animal-free proteins. In this role, she oversaw product launches, secured influential awards and developed life cycle assessments that highlighted the protein's environmental impact reductions. Before EVERY, she was director, public relations and corporate communications for Bonterra Organic Estates (Viña Concha y Toro USA), where for more than six years she oversaw product, company and sustainability communications for one of the United States' leading wine marketers. At GALLO, Cochran was the lead communications strategist for the imported wines of the LUX portfolio (now MAZE ROW), among the world's most acclaimed wines. Her deep bev-alc experience encompasses all levels of the wine commercial space, from popular-priced offerings to ultra-luxury wines and emerging growth categories such as NoLo. Cochran holds a BA Magna Cum Laude from UCLA, an MBA from the UCLA Anderson School of Management, and is a Certified Sommelier and published author (Hip Tastes, Viking Studio/Penguin).

## SUMMIT SPEAKERS



### **Ariel Daly**

*Vineyard Manager, Adelsheim Vineyard*

Ariel's fascination with terroir and wine's ability to express time and place comes from an international wine education gained in New York City. She graduated from Wichita State University and completed Vineyard Management and Operations programs at Chemeketa College. Previously, she was the Assistant Viticulturist for Atlas Vineyard Management and a research assistant at Oregon State University's Skinkis Lab. She's thrilled to realize her dream of working with historic vines for the opportunity to join the incredible vineyard and winemaking teams at Adelsheim.



### **Jean Dodson Peterson, Ph.D.**

*Chair of Viticulture & Enology, Washington State University*

Dr. Jean Dodson Peterson is the Founding Chair of the Department of Viticulture and Enology at Washington State University, where she leads academic, strategic, and student focused initiatives for the program. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Viticulture and Enology with a Minor in Managerial Economics, as well as her Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in Horticulture and Agronomy, from the University of California, Davis. At WSU, Dr. Dodson Peterson has played a central role in building and shaping the department's academic programs and student experience. She created and leads the VE Connects initiative, designed to strengthen student engagement through community building, transfer pathways and experiential learning opportunities connected to the wine and grape industry. She also established the WSU Viticulture and Enology Student Support Fund and the Experiential Learning Fund to provide resources that expand access to hands-on learning and professional development opportunities for students. Through her leadership, Dr. Dodson Peterson works to align education, research and industry partnerships to prepare students for successful careers in the global wine and grape industry.

## SUMMIT SPEAKERS



### **Matt Doyle**

*Owner, Doyle Vineyard Management*

Matt Doyle is the founder of Doyle Vineyard Management, established in 2009 with his wife, Carre. With over 25 years of experience in the Finger Lakes region, Matt has built a reputation as a forward-thinking leader in vineyard management, delivering high-quality grapes and innovative viticultural services. A Cornell University graduate in Agribusiness Management and Economics, Matt's career includes experience with Estancia Estates and Constellation Wines US. In 2025, Matt and Carre expanded their vision with the purchase of Quarry Ridge Winery, continuing their commitment to excellence from vineyard to bottle.



### **Sadie Drury**

*General Manager & Viticulturist*

Sadie Drury is a Walla Walla native who decided to combine her love for agriculture with her interest for wine by attending the Center for Enology and Viticulture at Walla Walla Community College and pursuing a career in viticulture. Sadie worked on Red Mountain for five years before joining the North Slope Management team in early 2013. She currently manages six vineyards in the Walla Walla Valley AVA including the famed Seven Hills Vineyard. Sadie is passionate about sustainable agriculture and has worked closely with LIVE as a past Technical Chair and is now on the Governance Council for Sustainable WA. Sadie served on the Board of Commissioners for the Washington State Wine Commission six years and was the first female chair. She is the 2019 Power's Sabbatical Recipient, the 2020 Washington Winegrowers Erick Hanson Memorial Grower of the Year, and a 2021 Wine Enthusiast 40 Under 40 Tastemaker.

## SUMMIT SPEAKERS



### **Erin Fitzgerald**

*Strategic Advisor & Founder, Fitzgerald Consulting*

A sustainability champion, catalyzing transformative business partnering with investors and startups. In addition to her strategic consulting, she is part of the advisory teams of Moonflare, Soho Capital Climate Fund, AgTech PR and Strategus. Where she works with start-ups on capital raise, go to market strategy, relationships and incentive finance structures. She previously served as CEO of U.S. Farmers & Ranchers in Action, advancing climate-smart food systems, representing 44 organizations and 1.2 million farmers addressing the UN and World Economic Forum. Erin secured 160 C-Suite leaders to endorse the Decade of Ag, a vision for food and ag sector by 2030. Featured in business books and media, recognized as a White House Champion of Change, Aspen First Movers Fellow, former Crain's 40 under 40. She has served on numerous boards and is currently serving Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation Board, Foundation for Farmers Organisations and Restorative Action, Carbon Underground and the advisory board of the University of Notre Dame Deloitte Center for Ethical Leadership, where she graduated in finance.



### **Doug Frost**

*Owner & Chief Executive Officer, Echolands Winery*

Doug is a Master of Wine and Master Sommelier as well as an author and wine consultant based in Kansas City, Missouri. Frost is one of three individuals in the world to hold simultaneously the Master of Wine and Master Sommelier titles, achieving his MS in 1991 and MW in 1993. The Wine Spectator has bestowed the accolade of Master of Spirits on Mr. Frost. With Dale DeGross, Steve Olson, Paul Pacult, Andy Seymour and David Wondrich, Frost created BAR (Beverage Alcohol Resource) in 2005. He was awarded Beverage Innovator of the Year 2009 by Cheers Magazine and he continues to teach and examine for BAR and within the Master Sommelier and Master of Wine programs. He is the author of three books, *Uncorking Wine* (1996), *On Wine* (2001), and *Far From Ordinary: The Spanish Wine Guide* (third edition 2009) and is a contributing editor of the *Oxford Companion to Spirits and Cocktails* (2020). Frost is the Emmy Award winning creator and host of the KCPT-TV hosted short series called *FermentNation*. Doug is also president of the Best USA Sommelier Competition (BUSA), official U.S. chapter of the Association de la Sommellerie Internationale, the group that chooses the top sommelier in the world. BUSA chooses America's top sommelier; the current reigning champion (2024) is Mark Guillaudeu.

## SUMMIT SPEAKERS



### **Devyani Gupta**

*Head Winemaker & Viticulturist, Valdemar Estates*

Devyani Isabel Gupta is the head Winemaker and Viticulturist for Valdemar Estates, where she oversees grape growing and winemaking for the Valdemar Family's Pacific Northwest portfolio focused on premium Chardonnay, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon. Outside of the winery, Devyani is deeply committed to service and leadership in her wine community and is dedicated to making the future of wine more inclusive; she currently serves on the Advisory Committee for the WWCC Enology & Viticulture Program, and serves as Vice-chair of the Washington State Wine Commission and board of directors for VITAL Wines.



### **Ryan Johnson**

*Director of Marketing, Ridge Vineyards*

Ryan Johnson is the Director of Marketing at Ridge Vineyards, a role he has held since 2021. With over two decades of marketing experience in the wine industry, Ryan has worked in executive marketing roles at King Estate Winery, Ram's Gate Winery and Silver Oak Cellars. Ryan is passionate about sustainability and chairs the RIDGE sustainability committee, reflecting his commitment to ecological and social responsibility.

## SUMMIT SPEAKERS



### **Alyson LaVarnway**

*Founder & Owner, The Osprey, Director of Sales & Marketing, Force Majeure Vineyards*

Alyson is the Director of Sales & Marketing at Force Majeure Vineyards. She began her career in the Washington wine industry in 2010 and has since managed direct-to-consumer sales, hospitality teams, distribution efforts and events for some of the region's founding wineries. Additionally, she is the founder and owner of The Osprey, a premier headhunting firm based in Walla Walla, Washington, that specializes in sourcing top talent for the wine and hospitality sectors. Alyson is deeply committed to supporting the continuous growth of the wine industry as it faces new challenges and explores emerging opportunities.



### **David Markel**

*Research & Development Manager, Willamette Valley Vineyards*

David P. Markel is R&D Manager at Willamette Valley Vineyards, supporting sustainability through vineyard innovation, including UV-C technology for powdery mildew management. He spent 25 years at HP Inc., focusing on applied research and innovation and is named on 39 granted U.S. patents. He holds a master's in Biomedical Diagnostics and helps further Willamette Valley Vineyards commitment to sustainable winegrowing and environmental stewardship.



### **Cyril Penn**

*Editor-in-Chief, Wine Business Monthly*

Cyril Penn is editor-in-chief of Wine Business Monthly (WBM) and winebusiness.com, part of Wine Communications Group, the leading supplier of information to the wine industry. Penn has been with WBM since 2000. His work on the wine business has appeared in a number of publications, including the San Francisco Chronicle, where he contributed the Wine Business Insider column for five years. Penn has traveled to wine regions throughout North America, Europe and South America. Prior to joining WBM, he was managing editor of the California Energy Markets newsletter in San Francisco. His background includes several years as a freelance journalist. Following stints at the Columbia Journalism Review and MacNeil Lehrer Report (now the PBS NewsHour), Penn worked for Reuters in New York. He holds a bachelor's degree in media studies from Fordham University.

## SUMMIT SPEAKERS



### Lauren Pesch

*Partner, Chavez & Leeds Family Vineyards & Leeds & Pesch Vineyard Consulting*  
Lauren Leeds Pesch is a fourth generation grape grower based in Rutherford, California. Having grown up on one of the first organic certified ranches in the Napa Valley, Lauren has witnessed the quality benefits derived from working in concert with the vine. She shares these experiences with her consulting clients through her viticulture consulting company, Leeds & Pesch Vineyards. She is an outspoken proponent of both organic and dry farming practices and believes them to be a cornerstone to unlocking the potential of many vineyard sites.



### Dave Pittard

*Owner, Buttonwood Grove Winery & Six Eighty Cellars*

Dave Pittard is the owner and farmer behind Buttonwood Grove Winery and Six Eighty Cellars, located on the west side of Cayuga Lake in New York's Finger Lakes region. Originally from Skaneateles, New York, Dave's path into agriculture began at Beak & Skiff Apple Orchards, where early hands-on experience working with cider, spirits, and fruit-based fermentation established a lasting connection to farming. He later studied at Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, building a foundation that continues to shape his vineyard-first approach. In 2014, Dave and his wife, Melissa Pittard, acquired Buttonwood Grove Winery, marking the beginning of a focused effort to produce wines that reflect both site and season. His work gained statewide recognition when his 2016 Riesling earned the prestigious Governor's Cup in 2017 as the best wine in New York. Building on that success, Dave and Melissa expanded their vision in 2020 with the creation of Six Eighty Cellars, a boutique project centered on innovation, sustainability and alternative winemaking techniques, including earthenware fermentation. Today, Dave leads all vineyard and operational decisions across both properties as a hands-on grower, with a strong emphasis on certified sustainable farming practices and a commitment to pushing the boundaries of grape growing in the Finger Lakes.

## SUMMIT SPEAKERS



### **Herb Quady**

*President, Quady North*

Herb Quady is a second-generation winegrower who moved to Southern Oregon with his family in 2003. In 2006, he planted Mae's Vineyard, 16 acres in the Applegate Valley, and founded Quady North Winery and Applegate Vineyard Management. Today, he farms about 80 acres of LIVE and Organic certified vineyards, and is a managing partner in Barrel 42, a LIVE certified custom crush facility. In 2020, Herb was awarded the "Founder's Award" from the Oregon Winery Association, and in 2024, Herb was named the Oregon Wine Press' "Person of the Year." Herb became interested in sustainable packaging after realizing that it makes up the largest part of a winery's carbon footprint.



### **Brian Ruden**

*Winemaker & General Manager*

A graduate of Western Washington University and the Institute of Enology & Viticulture in Walla Walla, Brian has more than 17 years of experience in the Washington wine industry. He moved to Walla Walla in 2006 to pursue his growing passion for winemaking. Brian first became a certified sommelier and started his career in winemaking at L'Ecole No 41. Throughout the years, Brian worked as a production manager for Alder Ridge Vineyard and Zefina Winery, and then as a winemaker for Cadaretta and Buried Cane Vineyards. Prior to his role at Echolands, he spent nine years as the winemaker for Duckhorn Wine Company, where he helped launch Duckhorn's Red Mountain label, Canvasback. An avid mountaineer, hiker and skier, Brian grew up in the farming community of Wenatchee, Washington with a love of the Cascade Mountains. He and his wife Ashley Trout, a fellow winemaker in the Walla Walla Valley, hope to teach their shared love of winegrowing to their two kids one day.

## SUMMIT SPEAKERS



### **Aaron Schreiber-Stainthorp**

*Strategic Sustainability Consultant, Sustainability Squared*

Aaron Schreiber-Stainthorp is a strategic sustainability consultant and founder of Sustainability Squared, specializing in helping wineries and vineyard operations move from climate commitment to concrete, measurable action. With over a decade in wine industry sustainability, Aaron brings hands-on experience translating ambitious goals into real business results. Most recently, he served as Sustainability Director at Jackson Family Wines, where he led programs across 14,000+ acres that delivered a 27% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions intensity and \$26 million in cumulative cost savings. He now channels that expertise into consulting, helping clients design and implement climate action strategies that are both rigorous and practical. Aaron has assisted in the development of the Climate Smart Winegrowing Toolkit for the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance (CSWA), a resource designed specifically to help California wineries and vineyards build structured climate action plans, mitigate climate risk and make meaningful progress on decarbonization. Aaron hosts the Carbon Accounting and Management podcast – a biweekly show exploring the tools, strategies and leaders driving climate action across industries. He previously served on the boards of CSWA, International Wineries for Climate Action (IWCA) and the Climate Center. He holds an MS in Sustainability Management from American University’s Kogod School of Business.



### **Brad Sorenson**

*Vineyard Manager & Viticulturist, Les Collines*

Growing up in working in agriculture in rural Wisconsin, Brad Sorenson knew he would always be happiest working outside growing a crop. After graduating with a degree in plant pathology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, he volunteered for the Peace Corps and was sent to Nicaragua for a two-year service. He worked closely with coffee farmers to diversify the range of crops they grew for food security and profit. A passion for wine cemented the decision to move to Northern California where he managed vineyards in Napa and Sonoma County for 14 years before moving the family up to Walla Walla. He is currently the Vineyard Manager for Les Collines, working with the in-house crew on all aspects of grape growing at the highest level.

## SUMMIT SPEAKERS



### Caine Thompson

*General Manager, Saga Robotics*

Caine Thompson is driving a fundamental shift in how wine is grown—replacing chemical and carbon-intensive farming with a new generation of regenerative, technology-enabled systems. As General Manager of Saga Robotics, he leads the rollout of autonomous, electric robots that replace sprays with light, eliminate diesel-heavy passes, and give growers a scalable path to a cleaner, more sustainable future. His work is focused on turning sustainability and regeneration from a philosophy into a system — one that delivers better vineyard health, stronger economics and higher-quality wine. Caine also serves as a Trustee of the Regenerative Viticulture Foundation, where he leads the global One Block Challenge — a practical, scalable initiative designed to help growers transition vineyard-by-vineyard toward regenerative systems. Through this work, he supports a broader movement to rebuild soil health, restore ecosystems and redefine what “sustainable” farming means in practice. Previously, as Head of Sustainability at O’Neill Vintners & Distillers, he led large-scale initiatives including B-Corp, CSWA and Zero Waste certifications while driving rollouts of regenerative organic farming (ROC) to Robert Hall and Rams Gate wineries and Certified Regenerative with many growers —bringing measurable change to one of California’s largest wine producers. Known for bold thinking and industry-challenging perspectives, Caine is focused on one outcome: accelerating the transition to farming systems that are lighter on the land, better for people, and built for the future.



### Ashley Trout

*Owner & Winemaker, Vital Wines*

Winemaker Ashley Trout has been an integral part of the Walla Walla wine industry since 1999. She has since worked eight harvests in Argentina, started three wineries in Washington and racked up both personal and professional accolades for her social justice work within the wine industry as well as for her wines, landing her as one of Wine Enthusiast magazine’s “Top 40 Under 40” and Wine Industry Advisor’s “Wine’s Most Inspiring People.” Trout started in the Walla Walla wine industry at age eighteen. Her part time cellar job became much more than that. She worked at Reinginer Winery for eight years, followed by Tamarack Cellars, Waters Winery and TERO Estates. In 2004, she began working the harvest regularly in Mendoza Argentina, at Alta Vista and Tamari with additional internships at Tapiz and Mendel. She launched Flying Trout Wines in 2006, focusing on Malbec and later sold the brand in 2010, staying on as the winemaker for five more years. In 2016, a decade after creating her first winery, she released inaugural wines for her two new brands, Vital Wines and Brook & Bull Cellars.

## SUMMIT SPEAKERS



### JJ Williams

*General Manager, Kiona Vineyards & Winery*

JJ Williams manages his family's three generation estate vineyard and winery on Red Mountain, Kiona Vineyards. In addition to producing 25,000 cases of wine per year – sold nationally – Kiona grows high-end wine grapes for more than 60 of the top wineries in the Pacific Northwest. He is a Wine Enthusiast 40 Under 40 awardee and currently serves on the Washington Wine Commission Board of Directors. He enjoys skiing on the weekends with his family, where he is serving his 23rd year as a Ski Patroller at White Pass Ski Area.

