



2017 California Craft Spirits Competition Judges

Chief Judge Tim McDonald - CSS & CSW Chief Judge CCWC & Spirits Judge 15 years SF World Spirits Competition

Tim has over 30 years of proven success in the wine industry with positions in public relations, trade relations, marketing and sales, event management and wine education. His experience includes positions at prominent adult beverage companies; such as E&J Gallo where he served as Marketing Director Fine Wine Communications, Peak Wines as V.P. of Marketing and Communications, Trinchero Family Estates as Director of Trade Relations, with Heublein Wines as Director of Trade & Public Relations, and sales assignments with both Seagram and Heublein.

Tim has experience with all types of Media, National Accounts, Wholesale Distributors, Restaurant, and Retail segments. Tim has served as a Wine Judge at over 100 Wine and Spirits Competitions here in North America and spoken frequently on assembled panels at many wine industry events.

Michael Cervin- Spirits and Wine Writer

Michael Cervin is the author of seven books including *California Wine Country* and he covers wines and spirits for Robb Report, The Hollywood Reporter, Forbes, The Tasting Panel, Fine Wine & Liquor Magazine (China), Decanter (London), Old Liquors Magazine (Netherlands), Vivino, IntoWine.com, Draft, Sommelier Journal, and many others. As a professional wine and spirits judge he has served at competitions in Portugal, Puerto Rico and throughout California including The Critics Challenge, The San Francisco International Wine Competition, The San Diego Wine & Spirits Challenge, The California State Fair Wine Competition, and as a water judge for the Berkeley Springs International Water Tasting, and the Global Bottled Water Awards in Prague. He is the wine buyer for The Garden Market in Santa Barbara, and writes a wine and spirits blog, Boozehoundz.

Rich Cook – Chief Judge at San Diego Wine & Spirits Challenge and Head Judge at Toast of the Coast Wine&Spirits Competition

Rich Cook has been writing about wine since 2008 and is currently a lead reviewer at the internationally renowned e-publication winereveiwnline.com. Rich is the Founding Director of the Toast of The Coast Wine Competition at the San Diego County Fair, and also serves as Director of Robert Whitley's Challenge Series, Monterey International, and the San Diego County Fair's Distilled Spirits and Homemade Wine competitions. Rich judges several major competitions, and is also panelist with the California Grapevine. When he's not swirling and spitting, he can be found teaching music or leading worship.

Traci Dutton- Culinary Institute of America - Manager—Public Wine and Beverage Studies

Traci Dutton serves as the Sommelier in the Wine Spectator Greystone Restaurant at the Culinary Institute of America. With the goal of creating The Ultimate California Wine Cellar to be housed in the former Christian Brothers winery, the wine list has won awards and gathered national recognition for the extensive representation of wines from throughout the state, with a special emphasis on Greystone's Napa neighbors. Ms. Dutton worked in New York City for 14 years and came to California with vast experience in fine dining beverage service and international wine buying. She specialized in Italian wines with her first Sommelier position at Andiamo! and then immersed herself in French wines (though unfortunately, not literally) by joining the top notch service team at the 3 star Montrachet, under the direction of Daniel Johnnes. Ms. Dutton worked as a consultant for several other restaurants in New York at various times specializing in mixology, beer, organic wines and the wines of the northeastern United States. In addition to her work at the CIA, Traci has judged the Dallas Morning New Wine Competition and the LA County Fair "Wines of the World" Competition, two of the largest competitions in the country. She has spoken on marketing at UC Davis, Sonoma State University and the Wine Industry Financial Symposium. Her special interest is in passing on the belief that most wine should be for everyday drinking and to continue to find places which produce.

Liz Thach – PhD MW Distinguished Professor at Sonoma State

Dr. Liz Thach (pronounced "tosh") is the Distinguished Professor of Wine and a Professor of Management at Sonoma State University where she teaches in both the undergraduate and Wine MBA programs. Liz's passion is wine, and she has visited most of the major wine regions of the world and more than 37 countries. In addition, she is an award-winning author who has published over 130 articles and 8 wine books, including *Call of the Vine*, *Wine – A Global Business* and *Wine Marketing & Sales*. A fifth-generation Californian, Liz finished her Ph.D. at Texas A&M and now lives on Sonoma Mountain where she tends a small hobby vineyard and makes pinot noir wine. She also works as a wine judge in various competitions, and has served on many non-profit wine boards. Liz obtained the distinction of Master of Wine (MW) in May of 2011.