

JUDGEMENT OF MICHIGAN

JUDGING SQUAD



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Black Wine
Professionals



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JUDGEMENT OF MICHIGAN

ADMINISTRATION



Michael Moyer
Superintendent



Gina Shay
MWC Vice President



Emily Dockery
MWC Executive Director



Lee Lutes
MWC Treasurer



Dave Miller
MWC President



Julia Coney
Black Wine Professionals
WSET LEVEL 2

From: Washington, DC

Position in the Wine Industry: Wine Journalist | Founder, Black Wine Professionals

Accolades: 2020 Wine Enthusiast's Social Visionary Award Winner

Bio:

Julia Coney is a Washington, D.C. and Houston, Texas-based wine writer, wine educator, speaker, and consultant. Her wine writing includes stories on wine, winemakers, and the intersection of race, wine, and language. Julia is the recipient of Wine Enthusiast's 2020 Social Visionary Award Winner for her work in writing and speaking on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the wine industry. Julia is the Founder of Black Wine Professionals, a resource for wine industry employers and gatekeepers, professionals, and the food and beverage community. Julia is a Contributing Editor for VinePair, the world's largest online drinks platform. You can find her on all social media at @juliaconey and her website juliaconey.com.

"We are blessed to be a blessing."



Ping Ho
The Royce & Marrow

From: Detroit, MI

Position in the Wine Industry: Owner @ The Royce & Marrow

Accolades: The Royce was named a top 10 wine shop in the nation by Vinepair in 2018 and one of the Top 50 Retailers in 2020 by Wine Enthusiast magazine. Marrow launched in October 2018 and was named one of Eater's best restaurants in 2019 and a semi-finalist in the James Beard awards for Best New Restaurant in the same year. Marrow's butcher shop was named by Food & Wine Magazine as one of the nation's top 100 butcher shops in 2020.

Bio:

Ping is an entrepreneur in the food and beverage industry. Her businesses include The Royce, a wine bar and shop, and Marrow, a butcher shop and restaurant, both located in Detroit. The Royce opened in August 2016 and has achieved considerable success as a one-of-a-kind establishment, offering a diverse and international selection of quality wines and curated food pairings. The Royce was named a top 10 wine shop in the nation by Vinepair in 2018 and one of the Top 50 Retailers in 2020 by Wine Enthusiast magazine. Marrow launched in October 2018 and was named one of Eater's best restaurants in 2019 and a semi-finalist in the James Beard awards for Best New Restaurant in the same year. Marrow's butcher shop was named by Food & Wine Magazine as one of the nation's top 100 butcher shops in 2020. Ping is also a partner in Mink Detroit, a Corktown-based sustainable seafood restaurant specializing in the freshest oysters from both coasts and one of the top 10 Detroit restaurants in 2019, according to the Detroit Free Press. Prior to being a business owner, Ping was Vice President of Digital Strategy and Business Development at Warner Music Group in New York City, specializing in business innovation and startups. Ping graduated Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Brown University and holds an M.B.A. from Columbia Business School.

"Wine is food, culture, history, time and place all rolled into one. What isn't there to love about wine?"



Tahira Habibi **Hue Society**

SOMMELIER

From: Atlanta, GA

Position in the Wine Industry: Founder, Hue Society; Co Founder, The Roots Fund

Accolades: Cover of Wine Enthusiast 40 Under 40, featured in Imbibe, Wine & Spirits Mag, Wine Spectator, Vogue, VinePair, and BET.

Bio:

Tahira Habibi is a renowned sommelier and the founder of Hue Society and the co-founder of The Roots Fund, which supports marginalized communities in the wine industry. With Hue Society, she creates inviting, educational, and experiential events and champions Black-owned brands. In her work with The Roots Fund, the nonprofit organization aims to offer tangible access and inclusion into the industry via financial assistance, job placement, and mentorship.

"Wine is about memories."



Phil Keeling **Wine Folly**

From: Atlanta, GA

Position in the Wine Industry: Social Media Manager @ Wine Folly

Bio:

Phil Keeling is the Social Media Manager and a writer for Wine Folly. He has written over 50 articles for their website, including their 34 Wines in 34 Weeks Tasting Challenge. He is a certified Concierge with the Coastal Concierge Association, and a published author of plays, fiction, and personal essays. He also worked as a stand up comedian for several years, but the less said about that, the better.

"If you've got a bottle of Riesling, it'll cause me to hang around for at least a few minutes."



Derrick C. Westbrook
Juice Chicago
CMS LEVEL II

"Is it Yummy? When it comes to talking about wine my job isn't to tell you what is right or wrong but to give you the language to talk about wine and the curiosity we all once had as children."

From: Chicago, IL

Position in the Wine Industry: Owner @ Derrick C. Westbrook LLC / Juice @ 1340

Accolades: 2019 Wine Enthusiast 40 Under 40 Cover; Owner national event series Samples & Samples, that pairs wine & music

Bio:

A love for people and a passion for spirits has served as the driving force behind Derrick C. Westbrook's journey into the wine industry.

Before turning 30, Westbrook became the Cellar Manager of Alinea Group's NEXT restaurant, and the Beverage Director of the Michelin-starred, Elizabeth Restaurant in Chicago. The sommelier was later recognized for his professional contributions by Wine Enthusiast magazine as a 40 Under 40 Tastemaker, becoming the first African-American in the wine industry to grace the publication's cover.

Today, Westbrook continues to break barriers in the wine industry while bridging the gap between spirits and culture, through curated dinners and experiential wine tastings. His signature event series, Samples & Samples pairs select wines with music from various genres, creating a unique, sensory experience for attendees. Westbrook has toured nationally, bringing Samples & Samples to City Winery locations across the U.S. with multiple sold out shows.

Westbrook has also hosted private events for major brands and corporations, including a fragrance and wine pairing for Chanel, and a custom Samples & Samples experience for Hilton with critically acclaimed musician Sharon Van Etten. In an effort to combat the lack of diversity in the wine industry, he shared his story at Twitter's "Many Shades of Wine" panel event in New York.

Westbrook has traveled around the globe to learn alongside international growers while sharing his wine expertise with others, visiting regions across France, Spain, and Portugal. He has been featured in numerous digital and print publications including Wine Spectator, Eater, VinePair, Chicago Tribune and Chicago Magazine. Additionally, Westbrook has made television appearances on ABC 7's Heart & Soul, WGN's Midday News, WCIU's The Jam and NBC 4's Today in Nashville.

While home in Chicago, Westbrook develops beverage programs for some of the city's top restaurants and bars, and is the Co-Owner of Juice @ 1340 Beer, Wines & Spirits in Chicago's West Loop neighborhood. When he's not somewhere sampling wine, Westbrook coaches the Near West Side Little League Champions, The Greys, in Chicago.



Maia Parish
The Wine Suite
WSET LEVEL 2

"If you want to get to know the people and or the culture, get to know the food and the wine, then have a glass and have a meal. We can start here!!"

From: Denver, CO

Position in the Wine Industry: Owner | Sommelier | Journalist |

Bio:

Maia Parish is Denver - based sommelier, wine writer, wine educator, wine judge, award-winning events producer, consultant and momtrepreneur. She also showcases wine regions within Napa, Sonoma and Oregon. She owns and operates The Wine Suite LLC, Parish Media LLC, and Parish Mobile Notary Now. Ms. Parish produces wine education inspired events. Her wine writing includes stories on wine, winemakers, pay equity, passive income, and food passions. Maia is the Founder of The Wine Suite LLC, an education wine concierge service and wine producing company within Denver, Colorado. She is a member of the Black Wine Professionals and is currently a fellow with the Society of Wine Educators, studying for the Certified Specialist of Wine certification. She holds a Level 2 WSET Certification with the Wine & Spirits Education Trust. Ms. Parish is a freelance writer. Her work has been featured in the Wall Street Journal, Food and Wine Magazine, The Somm Journal, The Zoe Report, Denver Luxury Magazine, 5280 Magazine, Dining Out Magazine, Cherry Creek Magazine, and the Wine Business Journal. She is a recurring writer for Vine Pair, the world's largest online drinks platform. Ms. Parish is the recipient of Best Wine Event in 2019 by the Diversity Awards. She is also the recipient of the Women of Color Award with the Battonage Forum , where she is now a mentor and panel speaker. Ms. Parish has spoken at conferences such as the Wine Media Conference and Battonage Forum. She is a recurring wine judge for the Denver International Competition, Drink Pink Vino, and the Canned Wine Competition. You can find Ms. Parish on all social media at The Wine Suite, Hungry Tippy & Grown, @thewinemistress and on her website linktr.ee/thewinemistress. She is an opinionated foodie, budding entrepreneur, and mother of Ms. Ross. Please send tinns and bubbles!!



Shatawn & Nadia Brigham

GRNoir Wine & Jazz

LEVEL 1 SOMMELIER

From: Grand Rapids, MI (Originally Benton Harbor!)

Position in the Wine Industry: Owners/Buyers

Accolades: First and only Black wine and jazz bar in downtown Grand Rapids.

Bio:

Nadia Brigham is principal of Brigham Consulting and co-founder of GRNoir Wine & Jazz with over 20 years of experience advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in philanthropy, particularly focused on racial equity and community engagement.

Shatawn Brigham, co-founder of both Brigham Consulting, LLC & GRNoir Wine & Jazz, and Community Schools Coordinator with Kent School Services Network and Kentwood Public Schools, has over 20 years of experience advancing education equity, and promoting community and parent engagement strategies.

"GRNoir aims to make wine accessible to any and everyone."



Joseph Allerton Roast Detroit

CERTIFIED SOMMELIER
WITH CMS

From: Detroit, MI

Position in the Wine Industry: Beverage Director @ Michael Symon's

Roast

Bio:

Joseph Allerton is mostly known for opening Michael Symon's Roast in 2008 in downtown Detroit. Roast is located in the lobby of the historical Westin Book Cadillac Hotel. Recently, Joseph was able to open Daxton Hotel and Madam Restaurant in downtown Birmingham, Michigan. Currently Joseph is back downtown with Roast as the beverage director. Joseph is currently working on completing the Advanced Sommelier exam with the Court of Master Sommeliers. When he is not working at the restaurant, he loves doing yoga or paddle boarding out on the lakes.

"Great wine pairs well with great company most of all."



Caitlin Buquet The Earle Restaurant

ADVANCED SOMMELIER

From: Ann Arbor, MI

Position in the Wine Industry: Wine Director @ The Earle Restaurant

Bio:

Caitlin Buquet is a Sommelier and the Wine Director at The Earle Restaurant in Ann Arbor, Michigan. With over 1200 selections, The Earle's wine list is one of the largest and most diverse in the state and has received the Wine Spectator Best of Award of Excellence for over 30 years. Caitlin discovered her passion for wine and hospitality working at The Earle while a student at the University of Michigan College of Engineering. She shifted her academic focus to wine, earning her Advanced Sommelier Certification from The Court of Master Sommeliers in 2019 with plans to pursue the Master Sommelier Diploma.



From: Detroit, MI

Position in the Wine Industry: Owner @ House of Pure Vin

Accolades: Winner of several awards in wine and service.

Bio:

Regina is a self-made wine woman and wine professional. Regina touts wine industry experience of over 25 years and has been working with Champagnes and Cognacs since the age of 23. She credits the start of her career when she joined LVMH Brands (Moët Hennessy - Louis Vuitton SE) and became intimately familiar with some of the world's biggest wine brands. She now owns, operates, and manages the highly esteemed House of Pure Vin is in the heart of Downtown Detroit. House of Pure Vin has an active social media presence where Regina engages her followers with regular events, including Instagram Live interviews with winemakers, sommeliers, and other wine industry professionals.

Regina Gaines

House of Pure Vin

WSET LEVEL I

"Opening doors for minorities to learn, engage and taste wine."



From: Rhinebeck, NY

Position in the Wine Industry: Owner @ Paul Brady Wine

Accolades: 2019 Wine Enthusiast Magazine "Top 40 Under 40 Tastemakers."

Bio:

Paul Brady is an experienced New York City sommelier and food-and-beverage manager having worked in well known restaurants such as Hearth, Terroir Wine Bar, Rouge Tomate, Craft, and Gramercy Tavern. In 2018, Brady was offered the position of New York Wines Ambassador by the New York Wine & Grape Foundation, a state-funded non-profit that advocates for New York's wine and grape production. While in this position, Brady was recognized as one of the 2019 Wine Enthusiast Magazine "Top 40 Under 40 Tastemakers." Brady is currently in the process of opening his own unique hybrid concept that combines wine retail and bar in Beacon, New York, specializing in the wines of northeastern North America.

Paul Brady

Paul Brady Wines

"My goal in life is to have fun. Nearby wine regions help make that possible."



Jeremy Duggan

Dusty's Cellar

ADVANCED

SOMMELIER, CMS

From: Okemos, MI

Position in the Wine Industry: Sommelier @ Dusty's Cellar

Bio:

Wine captured my imagination over 2 decades ago and led me around the country and world. From great restaurants and cellars in Sonoma, Seattle, Portland, Colorado and Michigan, I have worked and focused on sustainably sourced and locally produced artisanal beverages and culinary delights.

"Wine is and always will be a peasant beverage, grown and made by farmers to be enjoyed with friends, family and community."



Kristen Pennington

Carpe Vinum
Distributors

INTRODUCTORY

SOMMELIER, CMS

From: Milford, MI

Position in the Wine Industry: Owner @ Carpe Vinum Distributors & Lighthouse Imports

Bio:

Kristen was born and raised in Michigan. She has over 10 years experience in the restaurant industry where she developed a passion for wine. Pursuing that passion led her to the start of her career in distribution and importing. She worked for a Michigan-based distributor and importer covering territories throughout Michigan and several other states. In 2019 she left her job to start her own companies. Together with her business partners, Lighthouse Imports & Brokerage was started in 2020 and Carpe Vinum, a distribution company, launched 2021.

"Carpe Vinum!"



From: Ann Arbor, MI

Position in the Wine Industry: Founder/Buyer @ Ground Control Wines

Bio:

Kristie Brablec Founded Ground Control Wines in the summer of 2020. She started Ground Control Wines to discover and sell the kinds of wines she has come to love over the past 20 years in gastronomy. Simple, honest wines that come from a place of passion, sustainability and terroir. Kristie is also the managing partner of Zingerman's Food Tours, a food travel company where she infuses her boundless spirit and passion for learning into culinary and wine adventures around the world. Whether cooking guylas over an open fire in Tokaj, Hungary or teaching wine lovers about biodynamics in Tuscany, she finds inspiration in sharing new experiences, small producers and sustainable land management.

Kristie Brablec
Ground Control
Wines

"My aim is to is to celebrate the land and wine through producers who are passionate, honest and courageous. I consider myself the conduit to help people become better consumers."



From: Chicago, IL

Position in the Wine Industry: Freelance/Independent Contractor

Accolades: Kristy spent almost a year living abroad with her family visiting over a dozen countries and wine regions, and has tasted at wineries in more than 25 US states and two Canadian provinces.

Bio:

Kristy Wenz holds WSET 3 with merit, is a wine and travel writer, educator and communicator based in Chicago who focuses on helping people, brands and regions tell their stories through words, visuals and experiences. Kristy is a published author with numerous digital publications including The Vintner Project, Vinohead, Winetraveler, Wine Tourist Magazine, the Finger Lakes Wine Country, and the American Wine School. She is an educator at the American Wine School, SkillPop and for Go Wine, where she provides education for key multi-national accounts. Kristy is also a part-time assistant winemaker at a Michigan winery and is currently pursuing the Spanish Wine Scholar certification through the Wine Scholar Guild.

Kristy Wenz
Wine
Journalist
WSET LEVEL III

"My passion for wine runs deep. It's a connection - to people, places, cultures, histories and the earth. It's art and science, enrichment and enjoyment, and above all, it's a never ending story and infinite learning experience."



Randall J Coats
Wine 4 Da Ppl Podcast

WSET LEVEL II W/ MERIT

From: Detroit, MI

Position in the Wine Industry: Founder @ Wine 4 Da Ppl

Bio:

Randall Coats is a lover of the artistry that is represented by a beautiful wine. He is a WSET Level 2 certified. Born and raised in Detroit, Randall aims to bridge the gap between the wine world and communities like the one he grew up in, one glass at a time.

"After having an awesome Malbec for the first time, I thought to myself, 'This is what Jesus turned wine into.'"



Michael De Schaaf
Lake Michigan Shore Winegrowers

From: Benton Harbor, MI

Position in the Wine Industry: Grower/Consultant

Bio:

Mike de Schaaf is an experienced winegrower and winemaker with a pronounced knowledge and skill in cool climate varieties/varietyals. Mike also consults on vineyard and winery projects in the region and manages a working farm specializing in heritage breed pigs. His home vineyard features established and manicured Pinot Gris and Gruner Veltliner.



Steve Smith
Smith Devereux Wines

WSET LEVEL II

From: Chicago, IL

Position in the Wine Industry: Owner @ Smith Devereux Wines

Bio: Steve is one of the owners of Smith Devereux Wines, an award-winning boutique Napa Valley winery. He also works in the music industry as an artist manager at Mick Management. In addition, Steve is an adjunct professor at DePaul University, serves on the board of Dear Jack Foundation, a powerful voice in the fight against adolescent and young adult cancer, and is actively involved in North Star Reach, a camp for kids with serious and life-threatening illnesses located outside of Ann Arbor. North Star Reach is a member of the Serious Fun Network founded by Paul Newman.



William Ferguson
Locavino/Queer
Wino

WSET LEVEL II

From: Silver Springs, MD (Washington D.C. area)

Position in the Wine Industry: Buyer @ Locavino & Founder @ Queer Wino

Accolades: Featured in Wine Enthusiast June 2021 for their LGBTQ advocacy in the wine world.

Bio:

William Ferguson is a wine professional working full time in wine sales and buying at Locavino near Washington, D.C. Passionate about wine, food, and LGBTQ issues, William is reaching a whole new sector of wine enthusiasts through his Blog and social media, Queer Wino. William is also WSET 2 certified. He also love reading, writing, and dogs.

*"Wine makes every meal an occasion, every table more elegant, every day more civilized."
-Andre Simon*



Beth Antías
Regal Imports
AMERICAN SOMMELIER
ASSOCIATION
CERTIFICATE

From: Kalamazoo, MI

Position in the Wine Industry: Brand Manager and Michigan Wholesale for Regal Wine Imports

Accolades: Beth's forte in the wine industry is Spain, South America, and Italy. She is a classical singer with an MA in Theatre.

Bio:

Beth is a Michigan native who began her career in food and wine over 20 years ago, initially in fine dining restaurants in Philadelphia and NYC while supporting other careers in social service and performing arts, until finding her niche in wine wholesale in 2007. She's worked for Regal Wine Imports for over ten years, originally as their NY State Sales Manager and currently in brand management and Michigan wholesale. Raising a family in a tiny Brooklyn apartment with no yard was not for this Michigan girl, so she and her husband made the move to SW Michigan with their two children in 2016. The four of them can be found doing cartwheels now in their big, green yard!

"Stories give meaning to life; behind all good wines are stories. Wine is LIFE."



James Van Der Kolk
I-Lixer Beverage
WSET LEVEL 4

From: Muskegon, MI

Position in the Wine Industry: Owner @ I-Lixer Beverage

Bio:

James Van Der Kolk's extensive journey in the wine business began with a field trip to a winery in Germany during a summer term in college. Fascinated by the subtle, yet incredible differences in wines made from Riesling grapes grown in neighboring vineyards with different conditions, a discussion with the winemaker ensued and the rest is history. At 24, James knew he wanted to work in the wine world, but wasn't exactly sure how or where. As a West Michigan native, it turned out that the Fenn Valley Winery in Fennville, Michigan was a good fit for his interests. Creating his own role at the winery as the sales and marketing manager, James began learning literally every side of the wine business. From vineyard management and growing, to winemaking and production and through to every side of the sales process, James learned the ropes at this small family-owned winery. This experience gave him the insight into what separates a small winery with quality and uniqueness as its focus and a large corporate winery producing wine solely as a profit-driven commodity. These experiences with a craft winery remain at the heart of how James thinks about wine to this day.

"Wine is the rare consumer good that eschews sameness and only achieves greatness by seeking out difference and nuance based upon site, variety and vintage."