



Contact: Elyse Genderson
Tel: 212-605-0370
E: egenderson@cornerstonepr.com

Women in Wine Leadership Symposium 3rd Annual Conference Explores Critical Issues for Women in the Industry

New York, NY, October 30, 2014 —The third annual Women in Wine Leadership Symposium (WWLS) held Monday, October 20th at the Helen Mills event space in Manhattan was an inspiring and enlightening gathering of influential women in the wine world. The WWLS, hosted by The Winebow Group, is the first event of its kind with a mission to empower and educate women in the wine industry through a series of provocative panel discussions and wine tastings. Ruth Reichl, critically-acclaimed author, former editor-in-chief of *Gourmet* and restaurant critic for *The New York Times*, opened the conference with a keynote speech. For the second year in a row, Madeline Triffon, the first female Master Sommelier in the U.S., moderated the panel discussions.

Over 100 women wine professionals participated in the half-day symposium: winemakers from around the world, sommeliers, retailers, educators, and journalists. Panels addressed topics such as “Creating and Defining Work-Life Balance” and “Pathways and Strategies for Success.” Women winemakers and winery owners, including one cider producer, led a guided tasting and wove personal histories and insights into the seminar. The passion and commitment to quality of the exceptional women in Winebow’s portfolio was further illustrated during a walk-around tasting with wines and ciders from 28 properties in eight different countries.

Energizing the audience, Reichl delivered a powerful call for societal, cultural and practical change in and outside of the workplace. She touched on a variety of thought-provoking topics, including gender equality, body image and job satisfaction. Reichl advised, “Don’t waste one second of your life doing what you hate. This doesn’t mean I don’t believe in hard work.” She continued, “Concentrate on being very good at the things you like to do and be okay with not doing *everything*.”

Speaking on the Work-Life Balance panel, Kristen Wolfe-Bieler, senior editor, *Beverage Media*, and Jordan Salcito, beverage director for Momofuku, both stressed the importance of nurturing relationships and interests outside of the industry. Wolfe-Bieler also commented on the importance of learning to say “no” to freelance writing assignments and event invitations, in order to maintain balance. Sharing examples from her own experience, Salcito spoke about how critical it is to keep oneself valuable and effective in the workplace as a way to leverage a more flexible work environment.

Marianne Ruggiero, president of Optima Careers, questioned the concept of “balance” that can lead to unrealistic ideals. “Work-life balance,” she advised, “is achieved by taking personal responsibility for creating it and not by needing acceptance from others.” She added, “You can have it all, just not at the same time.”

Dr. Cynthia Emrich of Catalyst, a non-profit organization with a mission to expand opportunities for women and business, shared findings from “The Myth of the Ideal Worker” study during the Pathways and Strategies for Success panel. Catalyst’s research proved that strategies for career advancement do not work the same way for women as for men. Dr. Emrich advocated that women gain access to powerful mentors and sponsors, and that women must make their achievements known in order to be successful.

Marika Vida-Arnold, wine director for the Ritz-Carlton Central Park, gave a case in point regarding the “Women in Wine” series she created at the hotel. It was only by taking the initiative and sharing with hotel executives the positive press the series had received that she made management aware of how her events gained publicity, keeping the hotel relevant amidst a younger, downtown wine scene.

Fellow panelist Deborah Hansen, chef, owner and wine director of Taberna de Haro restaurant in Brookline, MA, responded to an audience question regarding why there are so few women restaurant owners with a frank explanation that it’s harder for women to secure necessary loan approvals from a bank. “If you know anyone who is on the board of a bank, let them know about the situation,” she told the audience. At the same time, she advised embracing challenge, “Be brave and stick with your passion and natural aptitude,” urging attendees not to give in to external pressures.

Moderator Madeline Triffon, the in-house Master Sommelier for Plum Market stores in Michigan and Chicago, is recognized as a guiding light and mentor in the industry. Triffon encouraged attendees not to fear challenges, stating, “Embrace difficulties, it will shake you out of the trenches.” She concluded, “We can fail. Failure can be illuminating and is another way we can achieve endless growth.”

The full panelist lineup included: Valentina Argiolas, Argiolas; Cynthia Emrich, PhD, Catalyst; Deborah Hansen, Taberna de Haro; Shelley Lindgren, A16 and SPQR; Maria Pica, Portugal Ramos Family Estates; Marianne Ruggiero, Optima Careers; Jordan Salcito, Momofuku; Autumn Stoscheck, Eve’s Cidery; Cynthia R. Tom, Whole Foods; Marika Vida-Arnold, The Ritz-Carlton; Kristen Wolfe-Bieler, *Beverage Media*; Izabella Zwack, Dobogó.

The Women in Wine Leadership Symposium program is guided by an advisory board comprised of leading women in the industry: Mary Ewing-Mulligan, MW; Mary Gorman-McAdams, MW; Lisa Granik, MW; Karen King; Linda Lawry, DSW, CWE; MS; Pascaline Lepeltier, MS; Carla Rzeszewski; Melissa Sutherland; and Beth von Benz.

For more information, video highlight reel and photos please visit: <http://www.winebow.com/wwls>. For press inquiries or access to the full photo album, please contact Elyse Genderson at egenderson@cornerstonepr.com or 212-605-0370.

About The Winebow Group

The Winebow Group comprises national importer and distribution houses that offer comprehensive portfolios of fine wine and craft spirits from around the world. The company represents some of the most established, family-owned properties in prominent growing areas, as well as a new generation of winemakers and distillers who are dedicated to innovation and quality. Led by President and CEO David Townsend, The Winebow Group was created in 2014 with the merger of two prominent industry forces, The Vintner Group and Winebow. Both companies were founded in 1980, grew significantly in recent years, and shared a common culture based on passion, knowledge and

outstanding customer service. By bringing together the best resources and the best practices of each company, The Winebow Group's financial strength, operational expertise, extended reach, and focus on education provide a unique platform and an unprecedented level of service in the fine wine and craft spirits sector. For more information, visit www.thewinebowgroup.com

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