



OREGON  
WINE  
BOARD

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## Oregon Wine Industry Awards Its Highest Honors to Industry Leaders

### Lifetime Achievement, Founders and Industry Service Award Recipients Named

**PORTLAND — Mar. 3, 2015** — The Oregon Wine Board (OWB) gave its highest honors to the state’s wine industry leaders on Feb. 24 at the annual Oregon Wine Industry Awards Dinner. The Founders Award was given to Jim and Loie Maresh of Maresh Red Hills Vineyard in the Dundee Hills. Earl and Hilda Jones, owners of Abacela in Roseburg, were presented the Lifetime Achievement Award. The Outstanding Industry Service Award was conferred on Chad Vargas, vineyard manager at Adelsheim Vineyard. The honorees were nominated by their peers for their extraordinary contributions to the Oregon wine industry.

“The Oregon wine industry has been shaped by the individual commitment of passionate members of our community,” said Ellen Brittan, chairwoman of the Oregon Wine Board. “We are proud and excited to recognize these outstanding individuals whose devotion to Oregon wine and the incredible energy they dedicate to its advancement, has contributed so much to the growing success of Oregon wine on the world stage.”

The **Founders Award** honors people whose long time work in and for the industry has positively affected the direction and accomplishments of Oregon wine, and whose personal efforts have helped foster cooperation among growers and winemakers. Jim and Loie Maresh are legendary Oregon wine founders who planted one of the earliest vineyards in the state and have been instrumental in securing Oregon’s long-term wine success.

In 1970, Jim and Loie planted what is today the fifth oldest vineyard in the state of Oregon, and the first on Worden Hill Road in the heart of the famed Dundee Hills AVA. It was pioneering vintner Dick Erath who convinced Jim and Loie that their 27-acre farm—now the 140-acre Maresh Red Hills Vineyard—would be ideal for Pinot noir and other grapes. Though not trained as a farmer, Jim Maresh enthusiastically embraced viticulture and quickly became a leader in helping create and grow Oregon’s young wine industry. It was with the help of Jim’s efforts in the courts and the state legislature throughout the 1970s and 1980s, supported by the small wine community that banded around him, that vital land use regulations were passed to preserve hillside land for agriculture. To this day, the Weber-Maresh Amendment is a frequently cited regulation that protects agricultural lands for generations to come. At the same time, wines made by winemakers like Fred Arterberry and others sourcing fruit from Maresh Red Hills Vineyard were some of the first Willamette Valley Pinot noirs to gain top scores from national wine critics, including a 98-point rating from Robert M. Parker Jr.’s *The Wine Advocate* for the 1985 Maresh Vineyard Pinot noir.

The **Lifetime Achievement Award** celebrates people whose work has been pioneering and spans not only a personal lifetime but the lifetime of the Oregon wine industry. Earl and Hilda Jones have had a profound impact on the course of Oregon wine, in part by being the first to grow and vinify Tempranillo in the Northwest and also for being important international ambassadors for Oregon wine.

For more than 20 years, Earl and Hilda have pursued a singular passion to produce fine wine from a grape variety that was little-known in North America before they brought it to acclaim. As ardent admirers of the great Spanish Tempranillo grape, they spent years researching climate data to find a place in North America that approximated the climate of the Rioja and Ribera del Duero regions of Spain, to which Tempranillo is native. They found their place in the Umpqua Valley AVA where they created Abacela (named after an ancient Spanish verb meaning “to plant a grape vine”). In 1995, they planted the first Tempranillo vines in the Pacific Northwest, and released their first vintage in 1997. Since then, thanks both to their tireless efforts and to the globally-acknowledged quality of their wines, Tempranillo has become a major category of American wine, thereby dramatically altering the course of Oregon wine history and adding to its arsenal of acclaimed wines.

The **Outstanding Industry Service Award** is given to an individual who has shown exemplary commitment, leadership and service to the industry. Chad Vargas, vineyard manager at Adelsheim Vineyard, is a clear leader in Oregon’s viticultural community. Chad continually works to advance grape growing research and knowledge, resulting in work that has a noticeable and lasting impact on the Oregon wine industry. Chad visits Washington D.C. annually, speaking with legislators on the industry’s behalf to increase research funding and heighten understanding of Oregon’s needs by the broader legislative community. He is the current chairman of Low Input Viticulture and Enology (LIVE), an industry-leading sustainability organization, and has served on the board for years in many capacities. He served on the technical committee for the Oregon Wine Research Institute and is an active participant on the Oregon Wine Board Research Committee. He is also a veteran participant with the Northwest Center for Small Fruits Research. Chad constantly innovates new techniques and farming methods to advance his knowledge and to improve the quality of fruit he grows for Adelsheim, sharing his findings to advance Oregon grape growing as a whole.

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#### **About the Oregon Wine Board:**

The Oregon Wine Board is a semi-independent Oregon state agency managing marketing, research, and education initiatives that support and advance the Oregon wine and wine grape industry. The Board works on behalf of all Oregon wineries and independent growers throughout the state’s diverse winegrowing regions. Visit [www.oregonwine.org](http://www.oregonwine.org)

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