



## California Wines Summit 2013 Guest Bios



**KELLY WILSON, Executive Director, Wholesale & Retail Services,  
British Columbia Liquor Distribution Branch, Vancouver, B.C., Canada**

Kelly Wilson has been an Executive member of the Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB) since 1993 and for more than 15 years has overseen *Store Operations* - 195 store chain, *Marketing* - full in-house agency services, *Purchasing* - all product in the chain and the registration of all liquor product sold in the province, *Distribution* – over 12 million cases annually from LDB warehouses, *Wholesale Business* servicing 80% of the private liquor stores in BC directly through LDB services and *Real Estate* which manages all facilities and properties. She is responsible for all 6 divisions of the Operations group at the LDB.

Her experience is more than 30 years of senior management in marketing and business management, primarily in liquor products. Prior to joining the LDB, Ms. Wilson was the Vice President of Marketing for Mark Anthony Brands, one of Canada's largest beverage alcohol agencies who is also a producer in the province of BC.

In 2012/2013 the Liquor Distribution Branch forecasts \$2.9 Billion in liquor business with a net income of approximately \$1.2 Billion generated from those sales. The BC Liquor Store Chain alone is forecast to sell \$1.3 Billion.



**KATHY CANNON, Director VINTAGES, Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO), Toronto, Ontario, Canada**

As Director, VINTAGES, Kathy Cannon is responsible for the strategic planning, purchasing and inventory operations of the Fine Wine and Spirits business unit of the LCBO. With sales over \$230M, VINTAGES brings to market over 100 new and unique products in limited quantities every two weeks. Through various channels including over 300 retail locations, a call to order catalogue and an online store, VINTAGES releases over 6,500 premium wine and spirits products every year.

Prior to her appointment as Director, Kathy has held a variety of Category positions within the LCBO including Product Manager for Spirits, Product Manager for Wines and Category Manager in VINTAGES. She was appointed Director, Wines in 2009 and later moved on to Director, VINTAGES in 2012. Prior to joining the LCBO Kathy worked in retail Category Management and Product Development for both the Food and Drug industries. Kathy's background includes 15 years of experience in the beverage alcohol industry and over 20 years in the retail trade.

Kathy has a Bachelor of Business Administration from Wilfrid Laurier University and the Advanced Award from the Wines and Spirits Education Trust (WSET). Kathy has represented VINTAGES and the LCBO on many international buying trips and has served as a judge for international wine competitions.



**DANIEL SIMARD, Vice-President, Procurement and Merchandising, Société des alcools du Québec (SAQ), Montreal, Québec, Canada**

Daniel Simard is responsible for the SAQ's overall purchasing and marketing strategy. He and his team are in charge of positioning the SAQ as a major destination with a unique shopping experience within the Quebec retail sector. He does this by developing coherent customer experiences across the company's sales networks. Daniel's recent achievements include overseeing a major technology shift that involved creating a social media presence and mobile apps as well as completely redesigning the SAQ's website, SAQ.com. He also implemented a new network-wide store concept based on category management and developed a relationship marketing program.

The SAQ is a government corporation whose mandate is to sell beverage alcohol to the public throughout Quebec by offering a broad range of quality products. The SAQ offers more than 11,000 wines, beers and spirits from some 65 countries in more than 400 stores.

Before joining the SAQ, Daniel was at Metro, a leader in the Quebec and Ontario retail food industry with more than 600 grocery stores. While there he held several positions, including Vice-President, Merchandising, Marketing and Sales, and created the company's first centralized buying group.

Daniel Simard studied communication at the Université du Québec à Montréal before starting his career in food retailing in his early 20s.



**BENOÎT BEAUDET, Senior Merchandising Director, Société des alcools du Québec (SAQ), Montreal, Québec, Canada**

Established in Montréal, Québec for 18 years, he is a 4<sup>th</sup> generation “Burgundy negociant”. A food processing engineer with a degree in management, he is a former banker who joined the SAQ (Société des alcools du Québec) in 2001 as a portfolio manager.

During recent years, as Senior Director of Selection and Merchandising for specialty wines and spirits, he has contributed with his team to the growth of sales of the high-end market in Quebec and took part in the creation of SAQ’s “Cellier magazine” in 2006.

In his mandate, he has the privilege to merchandise a large and deep scale of wines from all over the world in a high-end international connoisseur market.

He’s currently coordinating major evolutions of store merchandising strategies and relationship with suppliers.



**PEGGY PERRY, Vice President of Marketing & Purchasing, Willow Park Wines & Spirits, Calgary, Alberta, Canada**

Peggy Perry is the Vice President of Marketing & Purchasing for Willow Park Wines & Spirits and has been the company's principal wine buyer since the store opened in 1994. A native of Prince Edward Island, Perry received her formal education – degrees in both business and education – at the University of PEI, but her palate was honed in France. She first discovered her love of wines while studying French at the University of Strasbourg, and later while working in Bordeaux for negotiant Peter Sichel, among others.

Perry brings her incredible international wine knowledge and buying skills to the Willow Park Wines & Spirits team, along with her innate love of teaching. It's this educational focus which has helped to grow Willow Park's business – thanks to Perry, there are as many as ten weekly tastings and educational events, drawing 500 customers through the doors every week.

Perry has developed and hosted five educational television series on wine, beer and spirits, which run on networks across Canada and the U.S. Presently, she is the wine writer for Flavours Magazine and hosts a weekly radio wine review on QR 77 in Calgary.

Married to Brien, a former national ski team coach, Perry has three children and lives in Calgary. When she's not at the store, you'll likely find her creating another memorable meal for family and friends.



**ANTHONY GISMONDI, Wine Journalist, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada**

Anthony Gismondi is one of Canada's most influential wine critics. A top-rated writer, broadcaster and speaker, his expertise is widely acknowledged throughout the international wine community. The Simon Fraser University graduate has been the weekly wine columnist for the Vancouver Sun since 1989. Mr. Gismondi is also a consultant to Air Canada, where he assists in the selection of in-flight wines served system-wide by Canada's largest airline.

Mr. Gismondi is a senior editor with Wine Align. In 2002, he launched a comprehensive wine website [www.gismondionwine.com](http://www.gismondionwine.com) that contains a large and growing database of wines and stories chronicling his work and adventures in the world of wine.

Additionally, he and food writer/author Kasey Wilson co-host a popular fast-paced live radio show called The Best of Food and Wine on CFUN/CHUM radio. The Best of Food & Wine has broadcast on location from food and wine festivals in New York, Sonoma, Seattle, Banff, Victoria, and Whistler. The Restaurant Association of BC awarded him Media-Person of the Year for Outstanding Reporting in the Field of Hospitality in 1998.

Recent Wine Travels: In the last 30 months Mr. Gismondi's wine travel included stops in Finland, Iceland, the Columbia, Yakima and Walla Walla Valleys in Washington State; the Central Coast, Mendocino, Sonoma County and Napa Valley, California; Somontano, Navarra and Priorato and Penedès, Spain; South Africa's Cape Wine Region; Italy's Piedmont; Mendoza, Argentina; Chile's Maipo, Lontué, Aconcagua, Maule, Curicó, Colchagua Valleys; France: Bordeaux, Pauillac, Champagne; Ontario: Niagara Peninsula; British Columbia: Okanagan Valley; New Zealand: Marlborough, Hawke's Bay; France: Beaujolais and Burgundy.



## **JOHN SZABO, Master Sommelier, Toronto, Ontario, Canada**

Five hundred and seventeen people have been to outer space, but there are only 188 master sommeliers currently sipping wine worldwide and John is one of them; he was the first Canadian to add the “MS” credential to his name in 2004. Today, John’s chalk-full Google calendar includes writing, restaurant & private client consulting, teaching, speaking, and traveling the wine regions of the world. John is a principal reviewer for and partner in WineAlign.com, and his keyboard strokes appear regularly on Winefox.ca, Wine Access, CityBites and Niagara & County Grapevine magazines, and occasionally elsewhere. You’ll also hear him regularly on Classical 96.3FM radio.

Beyond the word, John designs wine cellars and manages private wine collections, leads luxury wine tours to the world’s top regions, buys wine for the Sommelier Service Wine Club, is co-owner of CellarPoint Ltd., a proprietary software system for restaurant beverage program management, and is currently beverage director for the Trump Toronto and the Terroni Group. In his spare time he enjoys visiting his small vineyard in Eger, Hungary; as a holder of a 2nd degree black belt in Karate, his grapes are well protected, too. – johnszabo.com



## **ELYSE LAMBERT, Sommelier and Wine Director, Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

Elyse Lambert has held several sommelier positions in renowned institutions in Quebec. Her career led to Relais & Châteaux L'Eau à la Bouche (Sainte-Adèle) and team Manoir Hovey (North Hatley). From 2000 to 2004, she was part of the brigade of 5 diamond CAA and Relais & Châteaux Auberge Hatley (North Hatley). From 2005 to 2008, she joined the XO restaurant at Hotel Le St-James in Montreal. She is currently in Old Montreal at Le Local where she shares her passion and knowledge of the wine world.

A spokesperson for Fair Wines and Spirits of Montreal in 2008 and 2010, Ms. Lambert had the pleasure to invite the public to the first edition of 'The Great Tasting Montreal' at Palais des congrès de Montreal in October 2011.

Elyse was winner of the Best Sommelier Competition in Quebec in 2004. She also won the third position of the Best Sommelier competition in Canada in 2006. This qualification allowed her to participate in the contest Best Sommelier of the Americas, held in Buenos Aires in May 2009, and she won the competition. As Best Sommelier of the Americas, Elyse represented Canada at the ultimate World's Best Sommelier Competition in Chile in April 2010, where she succeeded to the semifinal. It is now among the top 12 worldwide.

The *Court of Master Sommeliers* invited Elyse to join the program for the prestigious title of *Master Sommelier (MS)*. Only 186 individuals hold this international designation and come mainly from the United States and the United Kingdom. Mrs. Lambert has completed 3 of 4 reviews of the program and the theory test and service, the last level.

She has a degree in hotel management from the Institute of Tourism and Hotel du Québec (1998) and a certificate of specialization in professional sommelier of the Hotel School Laurentian (1999). – [elyselambert.com](http://elyselambert.com) (translated from French)



## **ANDREA VESCOVI, Sommelier and Wine Director, Blue Water Café+Raw Bar, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada**

In today's world of wine, which often features fuddy-duddy old-timers on one side of the divide and too-cool-for-school hipster sommeliers on the other, how refreshing it is to find the passionate pragmatism of Blue Water's Andrea Vescovi, right in the middle, where the restaurant diner sits.

The Rome-born Vescovi has always known food (his mother Bella cooked at Umberto Menghi's Il Giardino in Vancouver for years), but it was not until a then 24-year old Vescovi tangled with a 1985 Joseph Drouhin Gevrey-Chambertin – a heretical wine choice for a Roman – that he realized his path would be the way of the vine. "I realized right then that this was for me," he chuckles. He honed his knowledge the hard way, with rolled-up sleeves, serving and crafting lists at some of Vancouver's best rooms, until a meeting with legendary Vancouver restaurateur Jack Evrensel of the Top Table Group brought him into the Blue Water Cafe fold.

Vescovi has crafted that rare tome: a stellar wine list that is by turns fanciful, economical and voluminous – no mean feat in the gulag of the B.C. Liquor Board. The restaurant's customers can't get enough, nor can the reputation-making Wine Spectator, which awarded the list a "Best of" accolade, or the Playhouse International Wine Festival, which feted Vescovi as Sommelier of the Year in 2009. Vescovi responds, with typical modesty: "I just want to help people find out what they want to drink." – Western Living Magazine



**CLIVE DONALDSON, Wine Buyer, William Morrison Supermarkets, UK**

A wine sourcing manager for Morrisons supermarkets, one of the top 4 supermarkets in the UK with 12.3% share of the off-trade, Clive is responsible for the quality and scope of the Morrisons range covering North America, Australia, New Zealand, Champagne and sparkling wine, fine wine, Burgundy, Rhône, the south of France and rosé wines.

He has a broad range of industry experience from working with the award-winning winemaking team at McGuigan wines, a Senior National Account Manager with Australian Vintage Ltd responsible for their largest account, Tesco, for 5 years and hand selling fine wines for Oddbins. He was awarded the Derouet-Jameson Scholarship in 2011 for the WSET Diploma and is currently in the second year of study for the Master of Wine. Before switching to the wine industry, Clive worked for 10 years as a chartered chemical engineer and has a masters degree in management from Monash Business School in Melbourne.



## **ALEX HUNT, M.W., Buying Director, Berkmann Wine Cellars, UK**

Alex Hunt joined the wine trade as a van driver for Oddbins while studying philosophy and psychology at Oxford, where he captained the varsity blind tasting team. After graduating in 2000, he joined Mayfair Cellars, holding both sales and buying roles, before moving to Berkmann Wine Cellars in 2006, where he is currently Purchasing Director. In 2010, following acceptance of his second dissertation – entitled *Rising Must Weights in California: Trends, Causes and Implications for Winemaking* – Alex became a Master of Wine, receiving the Madame Bollinger tasting medal. A regular member of World of Fine Wine and Decanter World Wine Awards tasting panels, Alex also writes a regular column on taste and tasting for JancisRobinson.com, and was named The Drinks Business Young Achiever of 2012.



## **JULIA HARDING, M.W., JancisRobinson.com, UK**

Julia Harding passed the notoriously stiff Master of Wine exams at the first attempt in 2004, the top student of her year, and in 2007 she won the Institute's Communicator of the Year award. After reading French and German at Cambridge, where she also played hockey for the University and for English Universities, she worked for many years as a book editor specializing in languages and linguistics before applying her keen brain and fine palate to wine. After five years with Waitrose, in the UK's most respected supermarket wine-buying department, she became Jancis Robinson's full-time researcher, co-ordinator and associate palate in 2005. She played a major part in the markedly high quality and consistency of the texts and maps in the most recent editions of *The Oxford Companion to Wine* and *The World Atlas of Wine*, contributes to and maintains the editorial standards of the award winning [www.JancisRobinson.com](http://www.JancisRobinson.com) and has just finished researching and writing, with Jancis and with Dr José Vouillamoz, *Wine Grapes: a complete guide to 1,380 varieties including their origins and flavours* (Allen Lane/Ecco, Oct 2012). She lectures and has judged in various leading wine competitions in the UK, Australia, South Africa and South America. She was also chosen to participate in the inaugural Landmark Australia programme in 2009. In the same year she won a Special Award in the Louis Roederer International Wine Writers' Awards. Julia is highly respected as a Master of Wine mentor.



SARAH JANE EVANS, M.W., Decanter Magazine, UK

Sarah Jane Evans is a wine and food writer and journalist. She became an MW in 2006, winning the Robert Mondavi Winery award for the highest overall marks in the theory papers. Now Vice-Chairman of the IMW, she is actively involved in educating both consumers and specialists. She writes for Decanter and BBC Good Food, and the wine trade press.

After a degree at Cambridge University in Classics, and Social and Political Sciences, she started her working life as an editor in book publishing. She was then Associate Editor of BBC Good Food magazine for over a decade; and during that time was Chairman and later President of the Guild of Food Writers, and sat on the Government Foresight Committee on the future of food.

Her special interests are the wines and winemakers of the New World, and fortified and sweet wines. Sarah Jane has long-held affection for Spain, developed while working there on her gap year. She wrote *Seville*, a history to coincide with Expo '92, and her MW dissertation was on the Almacenista producers of Sherry. She writes the Spain and Sherry sections of the annual *Hugh Johnson Pocket Wine Book*, and also covered these topics for *The Wine Opus* and *1000 Great Wines*. She was made a member of the Gran Orden de Caballeros de Vino (for services to Spanish wine) and co-Chairs the Spain and Sherry Panels of the Decanter World Wine Awards.

Throughout her career she has developed a strong interest in finding the best way to communicate taste and flavour. Her particular focus – apart from wines, beers and spirits - has been cheese, tea, coffee and chocolate. She is a founder member of the Academy of Chocolate, and the author of *Chocolate Unwrapped*, a guide to fine chocolate and the world's best producers.

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## **PATRICK SCHMITT, Editor in Chief, The Drinks Business, UK**

Patrick Schmitt is editor-in-chief at The Drinks Business. He writes for and manages the European and Hong Kong editions of The Drinks Business, as well as the printed product's website [thedrinksbusiness.com](http://thedrinksbusiness.com). He also chairs the publication's annual awards programme, including The Drinks Business Awards for product innovations and environmental initiatives, as well as the magazine's Champagne, Rioja and Chardonnay Masters, for which he heads up a tasting panel of wine experts. Patrick has been shortlisted two years running for editor of the year in the business and professional category for the British Society of Magazine Editors (BSME). Patrick is currently studying for his Master of Wine qualification and, as part of this, has been awarded the Esterhazy and Reh Kendermann bursaries, as well as the AXA Millésimes and Yalumba scholarships.



## **GERARD BASSET, M.W., M.S., Sommelier & Journalist, UK**

Gerard was born and raised in France. After having qualified successively as chef and sommelier he moved to England for good in the mid 1980s. He then embarked on a very successful career as a sommelier. His sommelier achievements range from winning, on several occasions, the Best Sommelier in the UK title, as well as having been crowned Best International Sommelier for French Wines in 1992 and Best Sommelier of Europe in 1996. He also finished three times second in the Best Sommelier of the World (1992, 2004 and equal second in 2007) and in April 2010, in Santiago in Chile, has reached his long held dream of becoming the Best Sommelier in The World, 2010 (The World Sommelier Championship takes place every three years).

Following on from his win in the World Sommelier Championship, Gerard was awarded the Catey Special Award in July 2010. It is a prestigious distinction as famous personalities such as Jamie Oliver, Sir Terrence Conran and Lord Sebastian Coe (to bring the Olympics to London) are amongst the past winners of a Catey Special Award. In September 2010 the International Wine Challenge made him IWC Personality of the Year. With the start of 2011, Gerard won Harpers Wine and Spirits Magazine, Personality of the Year, 2011 and was also awarded 'Industry Legend 2011' by Imbibe Magazine. In 2013, Decanter Magazine presented Gerard with the prestigious Decanter Man of the Year 2013 Award. In addition, Gerard is currently the only person in the world to be simultaneously a Master Sommelier, Master of Wine and Wine MBA.

Aside from his wine-sommelier talents, Gerard has demonstrated a genuine flair for business. In 1994 with business partner, Robin Hutson, who he originally worked with at Chewton Glen, he co-founded the Hotel du Vin which they sold in 2004 after having successfully opened six hotels to much acclaim. In 2007, with his wife Nina, Gerard opened Hotel TerraVina and in spite of the recession, the hotel has moved forward successfully and has gained an incredible amount of national press coverage, a number of awards and positive PR.

An important aspect of Gerard's career is his skill for discovering young talents, mentoring them and inspiring them. The number of sommeliers and barmen who have trained with him are numerous and they have achieved great heights themselves, a fact that Gerard is extremely proud of.

In June 2011, in the Queen's Birthday Honours List, Gerard received an OBE which The Royal Princess Anne gave him at a ceremony in October 2011 at Windsor Castle; a very proud moment for him and his family.



**HERMANN PILZ, Editor-in-Chief, Weinwirtschaft, Germany**

Weinwirtschaft is the leading wine trade publication in Germany, with a print run of 7,000 and a readership of 30,000. Other Meininger publications include Sommelier magazine (5,000 copies), Wine Business International (11,000 copies) and Weinwelt (51,000 copies). Website: [www.meininger.de](http://www.meininger.de)



**STEPHAN REINHARDT, Editor-in-Chief, Vinum Magazine, Switzerland**

Vinum is Europe's leading wine magazine with 98,500 copies and a readership of over 400,000. Stephan is the Chief Editor of the German edition and also contributes to the Swiss edition. Website: [www.vinum.info](http://www.vinum.info)



**KATHY FÉRON, Buyer & Managing Director, Jacques Wein Depot, Germany**

Jacques Wein Depot is the largest chain of wine retail shops (280) in Germany. They currently do not have California in their assortment. Website: [www.jacques.de](http://www.jacques.de)



**HÅKAN LARSSON, TV Personality, Wine Writer, Book Author – Dagens Industri, All tom Vin and SVT1, Sweden**

Writes for leading wine magazine Allt om Vin (readership 120,000) and Dagens Industri, a daily financial and business newspaper with 385,000 readers. Mr. Larsson is also a wine critic with a show on national Swedish TV. Website: [www.alltomvin.se](http://www.alltomvin.se)



### **AKIHIKO YAMAMOTO, Journalist, Daily Yomiuri, Japan**

Akihiko Yamamoto is a wine journalist working for *The Yomiuri Shimbun*. Yomiuri is a leading newspaper with a circulation of 10 million copies. He was born in Yamaguchi in 1961 and graduated from Sophia University in Tokyo. He used to work as a music critic and began writing about wine and gastronomy in the 1990s. He writes daily wine news, winery visit reports and interviews with wine producers for The Yomiuri-Online, the most influential wine website in Japan. He is also a contributing columnist for The *Vinothèque* Magazine.

He published three wine books on Champagne, Bordeaux and Affordable wines respectively. He is inducted to the Officer d'Honneur, Ordre Des Coteaux de Champagne and Chevalier, and Commanderie du Bontemps. He speaks Japanese and English.



## **SONGQUAN GUO, Leading Winewriter and Consultant Winemaker, Visiting Professor, People's Republic of China**

SongQuan Guo, Visiting Professor and wine writer, has 40 years of experience in agriculture and winemaking. He started his career in winemaking at Great Wall Winery in Shacheng, Hebei Province in 1979, and then he joined Sino-French joint venture Dynasty Winery Co. Ltd. Tianjin, where he was in charge of wine making and production. After finishing the training course of winemaking in Adelaide, Australia, he acted as deputy general manager and chief winemaker of Dynasty Winery and was in charge of the winemaking for Dynasty brands. From May 1993 up to the present, he is general manager of Guo's wine technology center and acts as a winery consultant and wine maker, associate Professor and wine writer.

SongQuan Guo has studied and worked in Australia and has traveled to many other wine regions, including Australia, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, and the U.S. to participate in professional wine tastings as well as communicating wine making trend and technology.

As a famous wine writer, he has gained a strong reputation in the wine industry and has published more than 500 articles and a thesis about winemaking since 1983.

Also he published several books on wine in China including:

- 《Wine Chart》
- 《International wine regulations》
- 《International Wine Pharmacopoeia》
- 《Wine tasting method》
- 《International wine making Standards 》
- 《Wine appreciation》
- 《Encyclopedia of wine》

SongQuan Guo is also very active in the winemaking field. He acts as a consulting winemaker for many domestic Chinese wineries in Xinjiang, Ningxia Province.

Today he is one of the most famous and influential wine writers, wine consultants and wine columnists in the China wine industry.