

Press Release
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How to go digital and beyond COVID: focus on inclusion and female leadership at wine2wine Business Forum 2020

On November 23rd and 24th, the wine2wine business forum will take place for the first time in an all-digital version. The two days of the event will see over 50 online sessions and more than 70 international speakers come together in this innovative platform. While the 2019 edition had brought the wine industry closer to the theme of social sustainability, this year Vinitaly International and VeronaFiere wanted to be even more specific, focusing on the inclusion and role of women in the world of wine.



Rania Zayyat, founder of Wonder Women of Wine and co-founder at Be The Change

The ongoing public health emergency is having a major impact on physical events. But «*every crisis brings both risk and opportunity*», says Stevie Kim, curator of the wine2wine Business Forum project for Veronafiere. The wine2wine forum embraced the opportunity to become a digital event, and it rises to demonstrate that **adaptation does not necessarily imply an actual impoverishment.**

The wine2wine Business Forum has always gathered hundreds of international wine professionals in Verona and given life to a thriving two-day long conversation about the business of wine. Now in its 7th edition, on **November 23rd and 24th** the discourse will be open to anyone, anywhere: by going digital, the wine2wine Business Forum will allow ticket holders and speakers to connect, **network and learn from any location in the world**. The organizers have managed to recruit a number of speakers that otherwise would not have been able to participate for reasons such as time commitment or the difficulties posed by international travel.

The COVID emergency is not the only one to have dominated 2020. The wine industry has been rocked by two stories showing just how long the road to inclusion continues to be. First came "Wine Bitch" in Europe, followed swiftly by the scandal of sexual harassment that has hit the Court of Master Sommelier in the USA. Both episodes are prime examples of the need for a platform that brings together different and diverse voices to **enact positive change in the wine industry**. This platform is exactly what the next edition of wine2wine strives to be.

As well as implementing a focus on inclusion and female leadership, this year wine2wine has done everything to bring participants **the most diverse version ever**. The forum has lined-up speakers not only from broad cultural backgrounds but has also broadened the discussion to markets that rarely see inclusion in prestigious wine events. In addition, there is a common thread of **strong female leadership** steering the event.

Among the experts who will be on the virtual stage of the forum for the first time, there are: **Sandra Taylor**, President and CEO of Sustainable Business International; **Stephanie Gallo**, Marketing Director of E.& J. Gallo Winery; **Rania Zayyat**, founder of Wonder Women of Wine; **Jermaine Stone**, founder and CEO of Cru Luv Wine; and **Kodjo Adovor**, founder and sommelier of the Africa Wine Club. Among the speakers who will hold the 4 key sessions are: wine writers **Julia Coney** and **Elaine Chukan Brown**, journalists **Felicity Carter** and **Rebecca Hopkins**, and two Masters of Wine, **Jeannie Cho Lee MW** and **Sarah Heller MW**.

The wine2wine Business Forum 2020 has created a series of paths to **facilitate participants in exploring the themes** on which the next edition will be based. These routes are visible on the programme in the form of "**tracks**", such as those highlighting "**diversity and inclusion**" and "**Post-COVID Era**" discussions. You can navigate the full programme on the website of the event (<https://www.wine2wine.net/programme/?lang=en>). Early bird Tickets will be available until November 13th; ticket sales end on November, 20th.

About: *wine2wine* is a dynamic international wine industry forum organized by Veronafiere and held annually in Verona, Italy, since 2014. *wine2wine* 2020 will take place on November 23rd and 24th. The event is a key reference point for wine producers and wine professionals eager to develop and grow their wine business worldwide. *wine2wine Business Forum* provides unique opportunities to share ideas on the most important issues facing the rapidly evolving wine industry and to connect with wine professionals and experts. The forum usually takes place over two days and features keynote sessions, seminars, and interactive workshops which aim to equip participants with practical tools to improve their business. Speakers are renowned experts in their field and among the brightest minds in the wine world from Italy and abroad. Additional information is available at www.wine2wine.net or by emailing info@wine2wine.net.