

Press Release
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Ian Harris, CEO of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust receives prestigious Vinitaly International Award during wine2wine Business Forum

On Monday November 23, at the conclusion of his session, “What’s next for wine education,” Ian Harris, CEO of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET), was presented with the prestigious Vinitaly International Award by Gianni Bruno, Exhibition Manager of Veronafiere, and Stevie Kim, Managing Director of Vinitaly International.



Ian Harris MBE, CEO of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust.

Since 1996, the International Vinitaly Award has been awarded to illustrious Italian and foreign personalities, from the world of wine and winemaking, who are particularly distinguished for their work in an international context. Past winners include Livio Felluga Srl (2015), Weingut Bruendlmayer and Steven Spurrier (2017), and Demei Li and Leon Liang from China (2019).

This year the award was presented to Ian Harris, Chief Executive of WSET, a global leader in wine education. Under Harris’s leadership WSET has grown to offer courses in more than 19 languages in 70 countries, and he has pushed the charitable trust to evolve and adapt to an ever-changing market. It can be argued that no one else has done as much to modernise and promote wine and spirits education around the world. Ian’s vision is matched only by his passion, making him an ideal candidate for the 2020 edition of the award.

Kim and Bruno surprised Harris with his award at the end of his wine2wine Business Forum session where he presented his views on what's next for wine education. The presentation addressed three key questions regarding wine education. 1) How has the delivery of wine education changed over the years? 2) What impact have the last six months had on shaping the future of wine education? 3) Why is wine education more important than ever?

The discussion was not simply hypothetical, but backed up by new data that tell the story of how WSET managed to recover student numbers, following a sharp drop due to COVID-19, by moving toward a digital end-to-end offering. Although “wine is a social industry” and will never exist entirely online, the ability to offer courses, certified qualifications, e-books, and examinations online has kept the WSET market growing and evolving even in this difficult year. As Harris points out, “education is the driver of profit for all sectors of the wine industry,” it is “the investment that pays back” in as little as three weeks.



Ian Harris receives his award from Gianni Bruno and Stevie Kim, following his wine2wine Business Forum presentation, while session moderator Monty Waldin cheers him on.

It is precisely this practical, market-led approach that helped influence Vinitaly International when selecting Harris for this year's award. As Stevie Kim commented, “...it is not only that Ian champions education, it is the way he communicates its power for the industry, demonstrating that investing in education is not only good for its own sake, but improves your business and makes you more competitive in both a local and global market.” At a time where all aspects of the industry must adapt, Ian Harris's accomplishments in terms of education and innovation make him the ideal recipient of the Vinitaly International Award at wine2wine Business Forum 2020.



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 23 and 24. 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.