

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Gary Eberle will be Honored as an “American Wine Legend” at the**

**Wine Enthusiast Wine Star Awards**

Prestigious recognition is given to an industry pioneer.

November 11, 2020 (Paso Robles, Calif.) *Wine Enthusiast* magazine announced it will be honoring Gary Eberle, the “Godfather” of the Paso Robles AVA, as an “American Wine Legend” at the highly anticipated 21st Annual Wine Star Awards, a distinction only bestowed 5 times in the last twenty years. The ceremony will be held virtually in January 2021. Eberle will also be recognized in the *Wine Enthusiast* “Best of Year” special issue, December 31, 2020.

The American Wine Legend Award recognizes an individual or family who, based on their lifetime contributions, has been noteworthy pioneers in the wine industry. “Gary Eberle has demonstrated his commitment and passion to the industry for decades, and always thinking years ahead to make a positive and lasting impact on the industry as a whole. It is a pleasure to recognize his contributions with this award,” said Founder and Chairman and of Wine Enthusiast Companies, Adam Strum.

Affectionately known as the “Godfather” of the Paso Robles wine region, Eberle’s contributions to the California and U.S. wine trade are significant. Eberle was the first to place the Paso Robles AVA designation on the Eberle Winery Cabernet Sauvignon label and he subsequently co-founded the distinctive Paso Robles terroir as an American Viticulture Area (AVA) in 1983. With a staunch commitment to the possibility of age-worthy Cabernet Sauvignon from Paso Robles, Eberle was also the first to plant Syrah on the Central Coast and make a 100 percent Syrah varietal wine in the United States. As chief promoter for his brand, Eberle has worked relentlessly for almost 50 years building awareness of the Paso Robles and California wines through his passionate promotion to consumers, media and trade across the country. These milestones have proven to be significant as Paso Robles has become a respected force in the wine industry.

“The science and technical art of winemaking, from respecting the terroir and what it can offer to growing grapes and making age-worthy wines, has taken me on a life’s journey that I’m thankful for every day. I am humbled and honored to be recognized with this award,” said Eberle.

Eberle began his academic studies at Penn State University where he played football and earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology. He then attended Louisiana State University before heading west to California where he completed his coursework for a PhD. In enology and viticulture from U.C. Davis in 1973. “I chose Paso Robles based on Dr. Olmo’s recommendation that Paso Robles was the place to grow world-class Cabernet Sauvignon,” said Eberle. “I think we’ve achieved that,” he added.

Once in Paso Robles, Eberle launched his career as partner and winemaker with Estrella River Winery & Vineyards. In the late 70s, he decided to pursue his own project and acquired nearly 64 acres just down the road from Estrella River Winery. Shortly thereafter, Gary released his first Eberle wine, the 1979 Cabernet Sauvignon and opened the winery and tasting room in 1983.

Gary has served as a board member on several professional organizations including Founding Board Member of the Central Coast Wine Growers, Founding Board Member of the Paso Robles Vintners & Growers Association, and a Board Member of the California Family Winemakers.

In addition to being named *Wine Enthusiast’s* 2020 American Wine Legend, Eberle earned the 2019 Robert Mondavi Hospitality Award, and the 2015 Wine Lifetime Achievement award by the California State Fair. Eberle is the only American winemaker to be awarded all three distinguished honors. He was also named Wine Industry Person of the Year from the California Mid-State Fair in 2002 and the Wine Industry Person of the Year from the PRWCA (back then the PRVGA) in 1997.

Charitable giving has been a key value throughout Eberle’s career, whether through donations of his wines, or hosting memorable events at the winery. Eberle conceptualized and launched the Paso Robles Rotary Club’s Annual Winemaker’s Cookoff which has raised more than $400,000 for educational scholarships over the past 22 years. “If I had not had the good fortune of receiving a scholarship to play football at Penn State, I would not have been able to receive a college education and be where I am today. Seeing that kids who work hard and have the ability to receive higher education remains near and dear to my heart.”

**About the Wine Enthusiast Wine Star Award**

This year marks the 21st anniversary of Wine Enthusiast’s Annual Wine Star Awards, honoring the individuals and companies that make outstanding contributions to the wine and alcohol beverage world. The winners plus special Lifetime Achievement Award and American Wine Legend, will be announced in the magazine’s Best of Year issue. In a challenging year for all industries, we salute the dedicated beverage professionals who have innovated and flourished.

**About Eberle Winery**

Eberle Winery has showcased the history and diversity of the Paso Robles Appellation since 1979. Eberle Winery continues to be family owned and operated. With an annual case production of 26,000, Eberle wines are distributed in 34 states and six countries. Open daily from 10am to 5pm with wine tasting and cave tours. 805-238-9607, [www.eberlewinery.com](http://www.eberlewinery.com/).

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