

THE CELLARIST

SAVORING THE WORLD, ONE GLASS AT A TIME.



Sunday, November 29, 2009

Vintners Hall of Fame, the 2010 class

Five new members of the Vintners Hall of Fame were named today as the hall's 2010 class. The hall, located at CIA's Greystone campus in St. Helena, was inaugurated in 2007 to honor those who have contributed the most to the California wine industry.

This somewhat smaller class both looks to the recent past — specifically the rise of Napa Valley — and adds a dose of zany to the mix. (Disclosure: I'm among the writers who voted on the nominees.)

Specifically here I'm referencing the induction of one Randall Grahm, founder of Bonny Doon Vineyard and general rabblrouser about the vineyards. Grahm's selection is no surprise given his impact and influence on the state's wine industry, but it is a nod to the impact of both his marketing genius and his advocacy for Rhone-style wines.



Ron Wurzer/Special to The Chronicle, 2007

In the Napa corner, there is Andy Beckstoffer, who not only owns some of the state's most prized vineyard land but also helped turn the model of top wines from one controlled by wineries to one controlled by growers — specifically by pioneering a model that rewarded them for the quality, not the quantity, of their fruit. (Beckstoffer almost made it into the 2008 class.) Also Al Brounstein, whose Diamond Creek Cabernets set a template for long-aging wines that commanded a premium; his were the first California wines prices more than \$100 per bottle.

Another inductee with Napa ties, though better known for her work in Sonoma at Simi, is Zelma Long. Long not only was one of the pioneering women in California wine, but her technical savvy has informed an entire generation of winemakers.

Finally there is Leon Adams, one of the Wine Institute's founders and author of "The Wines of America," an encyclopedic 1973 look at wineries nationwide. Adams, who died in 1995, was honored as an industry "pioneer."

The honorees will be inducted in March 2010.

Posted By: Jon Bonné | November 20 2009 at 05:21 PM

Read more: http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/blogs/wine/detail?entry_id=52124&o=2>a=commentslistpos#commentslistpos#ixzzoYfqMEZle