



**TEXSOM**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Michael Wangbickler  
Balzac Communications  
mwangbickler@balzac.com  
408-981-5415

### **RACHEL DELROCCO OF CAMERATA AT PAULIE'S NAMED BEST SOMMELIER AT 12th ANNUAL TEXSOM**

2016 TEXSOM Best Sommelier Competition Presented by Texas Monthly

Irving, Texas (August 15, 2016) – TEXSOM co-founders and Master Sommeliers Drew Hendricks and James Tidwell today announced at the Wine & Food Foundation of Texas Grand Tasting that Rachel DelRocco of Camerata at Paulie's in Houston, Texas is the 2016 TEXSOM Best Sommelier. The 2016 TEXSOM Best Sommelier Competition, presented by Texas Monthly, takes place during TEXSOM, the most prominent and influential wine education conference in the United States, held annually at the Four Seasons Resort and Club Dallas at Las Colinas in Irving, Texas.

DelRocco topped an impressive field of 24 other competitors in a rigorous three-part wine examination involving service, blind tasting and theory. An elite panel of Master Sommelier judges named DelRocco the 2016 TEXSOM Best Sommelier at a ceremony on Monday evening. The competition is a key part of TEXSOM. To participate, candidates must be a current resident of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, or Texas and must not have passed the Court of Master Sommeliers' Advanced Sommelier Examination.

"Eleven years ago, TEXSOM was founded on an idealistic vision of advancing our industry and elevating standards in a constant quest for excellence," said Tidwell. "The TEXSOM Best Sommelier Competition is an opportunity for those individuals who show real promise in these areas to demonstrate their prowess. We offer hearty congratulations to Ms. DelRocco for winning the competition this year, and look forward to next year's competition."

In addition to laying claim to the title of "2016 TEXSOM Best Sommelier," DelRocco received a scholarship of \$2,500 from the Guild of Sommeliers Education Foundation to be used for a Court of Master Sommeliers certification program. David Donalson of Classified Wines in Euless, Texas was the second runner up and will receive a \$1,500 scholarship, and the 3rd place winner Lindsay Drew of Lonesome Dove in Austin, Texas will receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

Held August 12th to 15th at the Four Seasons and co-presented by the not-for-profit organizations the GuildSomm, SOMMFoundation, Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas, Wine & Spirit Education Trust, and Society of Wine Educators – TEXSOM is the only event of its kind in the United States. The speakers and judges constitute a who's who list of the nation's top wine professionals. Dozens of Master Sommeliers (MS), Certified Wine Educators (CWE), Masters of Wine (MW) and other respected industry professionals were integral parts of the conference.

**The 2016 TEXSOM conference featured a stellar line-up of seminars, including:**

- A bonus seminar presented by Jamie Goode Ph.D., on the age-ability of South African wines.
- A presentation on the state of sparkling wines by noted author Tom Stevenson, regarded as the world's leading authority on Champagne.
- A seminar on the wines from the east (Slovenia, Turkey, Georgia, Greece, and Armenia) by Masters of Wine Christy Canterbury, Lisa Granik, and Jean K. Reilly.
- A panel discussion on viticulture and the impact of site on sensory qualities with panelists including Milan Brajkovich, Edgardo del Popolo, Greg Harrington MS, and Steve Matthiasson – moderated by Paz Levinson.
- A regional focus seminar on wine from Italy's islands by Charles Curtis MW and Laura DePasquale MS.
- An exploration of what makes a classic wine by Master Sommelier Joseph Spellman and Paul Wagner, respected author and founder of Balzac Communications & Marketing.
- A seminar on complexities in rum by Masters of Wine Dilek Caner and Antony Moss.
- A study of the history of coffee by Ian Picco, Director of Coffee at Seed-to-Cup Coffee Company Topeca.
- A discussion on Vinifera bias by Clark Smith, author and innovator.
- A bonus seminar presented by The World of Fine Wine on extracurricular activities for sommeliers, featuring industry luminaries Elaine Chukan Brown, Michael Franz Ph.D., Frances Percival, Josh Reynolds, and Mark Tarlov, moderated by Jim Clark.
- An exploration comparing and contrasting wines from Pfalz and Alsace by Master Sommeliers Wayne Belding and Laura Rhys.
- A basic training session of wines from Jura by Wink Lorch, wine writer and educator, and author of Jura Wine.
- An exploration of the future of the wine market and the future of sommeliers by Damien Wilson Ph.D., Hamel Family Chair of Wine Business Education at Sonoma State University's Wine Business Institute.
- A GuildSomm study in translating tasting terminology by Master Sommeliers Geoff Kruth and Jason Smith.
- A panel discussion on southern hemisphere breakout wines featuring W. Scott Harper MS CWE, Andrew McNamara MS, Peter Neptune MS DipWSET CWE, Nicholas Paris MW, and Sheri Sauter Morano MW, moderated by Cameron Douglas MS.
- A discussion of iconic wines from unusual places by famed wine writer Josh Reynolds and Larry Stone MS.
- An exploration of "The Old New California Wines" by Matt Stamp MS CSW and Kelli White, author and sommelier.
- A variety focus seminar on Chenin Blanc presented by Pascaline Lepeltier MS and Patrick Capiello, Operating Partner and Wine Director for Rebelle and Pearl & Ash restaurants.
- Ownership insights into expectations and evaluation from Doug Zeif, Principal at The Concept Gurus and Next! Hospitality Advisors.
- A panel discussion on Vin de France and exploring quality beyond category, moderated by Sean Razee MS DipWSET and including Shayn Bjornholm MS, Matthew Citriglia MS, Jason Heller MS, David Wrigley MW DipWSET.
- A study presentation by SOMMFoundation on classic wine ageability by Frederick L. Dame MS, Jay Fletcher MS, Jay James MS, and Guy Stout MS CWE.
- An exploration of the lineage of pilsner beer by Master Sommelier and Certified Cicerone Melissa Monosoff.
- A bonus seminar presented by The World of Fine Wine on the philosophy of a wine list featuring Pascaline Lepeltier MS, Jeff Porter, Jason Smith MS, and Bernard Sun moderated by Frances Percival, Food Editor and Columnist for The World of Fine Wine.
- A regional focus on New York wines presented by Kelli White and Master Sommelier Christopher Bates.
- A panel discussion on wine certifications including Andrew McNamara MS, Antony Moss MW DipWSET, Paul Wagner, and Emily Wines MS, moderated by author and journalist Jordan Mackay.
- A seminar on the coastal qualities of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, presented by John Blazon MS and Geoff Labitzke MW.
- A retrospective study of iconic winery Robert Mondavi and their Fume Blanc Reserve presented by Masters of Wine Mark de Vere and Peter Marks.

**2016 Sponsors: The event is made possible by the generous support of many sponsors, with scholarships provided by the SOMMFoundation.**

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#### *ABOUT TEXSOM*

*Founded in 2005, TEXSOM was started by Master Sommeliers James Tidwell and Drew Hendricks to help promote professional wine service standards, outline paths for further wine education and certification, and raise public awareness about the professional standards and certifications for sommeliers. Today the conference draws more than 1,200 attendees, of whom more than 800 are sommeliers and other beverage industry professionals. In addition to the conference, the group also manages the TEXSOM International Wine Awards. One of the largest, most respected, and longest-running in the United States, the competition was founded in 1985 by journalist and wine expert Rebecca Murphy.*