



# WINE ENTHUSIAST

MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 15, 2010

## 2010 WINE STAR AWARDS

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HONORING THE YEAR'S 12 MOST INFLUENTIAL FACES & PLACES IN THE WORLD OF WINE



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT  
**BARON ERIC DE ROTHSCHILD**



WINEMAKER OF THE YEAR  
**GENEVIEVE JANSSENS**



RESTAURATEUR OF THE YEAR  
**TYLER FLORENCE**



PERSON OF THE YEAR  
**BILL FOLEY**

EXPLODING THE  
**MERLOT MYTH**

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FLAVORED  
**VODKA**

THE NEWEST TOOL IN THE BARTENDER'S ARSENAL

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*Simple*  
**ASIAN NOODLE RECIPES**

TO PAIR WITH YOUR FAVORITE WINE

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**SIDEWAYS THE SEQUEL**  
WE SPEAK TO AUTHOR  
**REX PICKETT**

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■ Retailer of the Year  
**Sherry-Lehmann**

Embracing innovation while adhering to the basics of great customer service, this renowned retailer manages an impressive inventory of the world's greatest wines.

Upon entering the gracious wood-paneled Sherry-Lehmann on Park Avenue and 59th Street in New York City, it is hard to imagine that this elegant wine and spirits emporium began life as a bootlegging operation during Prohibition. Perhaps the oldest continuously operating wine and liquor store in the U.S., Sherry-Lehmann began its legitimate life as Sherry Wine and Spirits Co., Inc., when the repeal of the Volstead Act enabled founder (and whiskey lover) Jack Aaron to convert his spirits business into what has grown to become one of the finest wine shops in the world.

Originally taking its name from its first location, the Louis Sherry Building on Madison Avenue and 62nd Street, Sherry Wine and Spirits moved its focus from spirits to wine one year after its 1934 founding. Jack Aaron was joined in business by his brother Sam, whose interest in wine rivaled his brother's love of whiskey. As the business expanded under the Aaron brothers, it moved several times—first one block south, to Madison Avenue and 61st Street, in 1937, and again across the street to 679 Madison Avenue. In the meantime, in 1965, the Aarons had taken over their largest competitor, a gourmet butcher and grocery store, which also sold wine and liquor. With this acquisition of M. Lehmann in 1965, the name was changed to Sherry-Lehmann. In 2007, Sherry-Lehmann relocated to its present three-floor, 9,000-square-foot location.

Strolling the aisles of the boutique-like 59th Street location, it is hard to imagine the immensity of the operation. The inventory has grown to include 7,000 labels, and the burgundy-carpeted shop is just the tip of the iceberg in a retail enterprise that includes a 65,000-square-foot temperature- and humidity-controlled warehouse, a catalog and Internet business which



Chris Adams



service 100,000 customers per year, a Wine Club and Master Class series lead by Kevin Zraly, and a staff of 70 which grows to 200 during the holiday season. Under the tutelage of Robin Kelley O'Connor, director of sales and education, the highly knowledgeable, multilingual sales team can help customers choose the perfect wine for any occasion. Clients can be assured that whether they select a Castillo de Jumilla Monastrell Rosado 2008 for \$8.95 a bottle, or an Imperial of Mouton-Rothschild 2005 for \$8,950, their purchase will be presented to them at perfect cellar temperature.

Sam Aaron stepped down in April, 1990, and his son Michael Aaron became chairman. At that time, Michael Yurch became his partner, holding the title of President. In 2005, Chris Adams and Shyda Gilmer joined as partners. Michael Aaron retired in 2008, and is now Chairman Emeritus. Shyda Gilmer is now COO and Chris Adams is CEO.

"It's a great honor for us to be recognized by *Wine Enthusiast*," says Adams. "We work hard every day because we are passionate not just about wine and spirits, but about this store, and are proud to be the caretakers of its storied history and tradition. One of the principles of our long history has been to remember the basics while embracing innovation, and we will continue to develop and expand our business while always remembering that service is what

makes Sherry-Lehmann special. We couldn't be prouder of this award, and we consider it a highlight of Sherry-Lehmann's 76 years in business."

Anyone at Sherry-Lehmann will tell you that their business is built on three simple principles: service, service and service. It is this commitment to service that has earned Sherry-Lehmann the *Wine Enthusiast* Retailer of the Year Award.

—MIKE DESIMONE AND JEFF JENSEN