

*Excellence  
in wine & spirit*  
**MEININGER AWARD**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Düsseldorf, 14 October 2020**

**Meininger Award - Excellence in Wine & Spirits 2020**

**Award for deserving personalities and families in the wine and spirits business**

**As part of its "International Wine Conference" in Düsseldorf yesterday evening, Meininger Verlag presented its coveted "Excellence in Wine and Spirit" awards to outstanding personalities and families in the international wine and spirits industry.**

They were presented in the categories "National and International Wine Entrepreneurs" as well as "Wine Family of the Year", "Lifetime Achievement", "Honorary Award" and "Spirit Brand of the Year". This year the award ceremony had to be postponed due to the Corona-related cancellation of the world's leading trade fair ProWein (Düsseldorf).

**The Meininger Awards of the Year 2020 honour the following companies and personalities:**

- National Wine Entrepreneur of the Year: Christoph Mack, Mack & Schühle
- International Wine Entrepreneur of the Year: Andrea Sartori, Sartori di Verona
- Lifetime Achievement Award: Patrice Monmousseau, Bouvet-Ladubay
- Wine Family of the Year: González family, González Byass
- Meininger Outstanding Achievement Award: Willi Bründlmayer, Bründlmayer Winery
- International Spirit Brand of the Year: Cointreau

**National Wine Entrepreneur of the Year: Christoph Mack, Mack & Schühle**

The national wine entrepreneur is Christoph Mack, owner of the important import house Mack & Schühle in Owen/Teck. The son of the company's founder, Christoph Mack has turned the family business, which has been in existence since 1939, into an internationally active trading house and important importer. Mack &

*Excellence  
in wine & spirit*  
**MEININGER AWARD**

Schühle operates its own production facilities in Spain and Italy. The product range includes wines and spirits from all the world's renowned growing regions. "Professionalism, reliability, high strategic thinking and acting, high standards for himself and others, cosmopolitanism and internationality characterise the personality of Christoph Mack", said the laudatory speech of the chief editor of the trade journal Weinwirtschaft, Dr. Hermann Pilz. Christoph Mack has been President of the Federal Association of Wine and Spirit Importers since 2010.

**International Wine Entrepreneur of the Year:**

**Andrea Sartori, Sartori di Verona**

The Meininger Award as an international wine entrepreneur goes to Andrea Sartori, President of the Sartori di Verona Wine House. His great-grandfather Pietro Sartori, a hotelier, began bottling wines for his own use in 1898. Soon he was supplying customers in the wider area. The son, who took over the business, created strong brands and laid the foundations for a growing export orientation. Investments were also made in technology. Valpolicella, Amarone and Soave from Sartori became increasingly popular in markets such as Germany and the USA. In 2000 the fourth generation took over responsibility. Andrea Sartori managed the export activities, which today account for a proud 70 percent of production, and was elected president of the family business. The expansion was steady. The fact that a company as large as Sartori draws around 80 percent of its wines from its own vineyards is a well-considered fact. This is the best way to meet the high quality demands. For the Italian wine industry, but also for the European Union, Andrea Sartori is an indispensable personality due to his expertise and his membership in numerous national and international organisations and committees.

**Lifetime Achievement Award: Patrice Monmousseau, Bouvet-Ladubay**

Patrice Monmousseau, sparkling wine producer from the Loire, will be presented with the Meininger Award 2020 for his life's work. Bouvet-Ladubay is one of the most important producers of high quality Loire sparkling wines (also Crémants), based in Saumur. The Monmousseau family is the owner. Patrice Monmousseau is very effectively supported by his daughter Juliette. Since Patrice Monmousseau, who learned the trade from scratch in the company, was appointed to the top floor by his father in 1972, he has steered the ship through some heavy seas. In the meantime, the winery was owned by an Indian beverage company, but then passed back into family ownership. Patrice Monmousseau is a personality with

*Excellence  
in wine & spirit*  
**MEININGER AWARD**

many interests. He skilfully combined his passion for fast cars and art with the company, which sponsors car races, for example, and organises numerous art and literature events in the region. All of this contributes as much to a company's reputation as the quality of its products and brands. The fact that Crémant de Loire and Saumur Brut have also become well-known and popular sparkling wines in Germany is related to this. Together with his friend Gérard Depardieu he created a sparkling wine line. The laudation attests to the charismatic personality of this dedicated, humorous and modest man, as does everyone who met him: a true sparkling wine personality!

**Wine Family of the Year: Familie González, González Byass**

The González family and the González Byass family business, which has been in existence for almost 200 years, will be honoured as the Wine Family of the Year. Like no other, the company's boss Mauricio González Gordon stands for the highest quality in Spanish viticulture. The sherry brand Tio Pepe is one of the most popular and best-selling of its kind. After all, sherry has been the core competence of the company since Manuel María González founded a sherry cellar in 1835. Admittedly, the name today also stands for other high-quality wines and brands, as the family has acquired vineyards in the best growing areas of Spain and beyond in Chile (2016) and Mexico for years. For Mauricio González Gordon and his family members, quality, indeed "excellence", is the top priority. This is what distinguishes the wines from all others. A dedicated oenological research centre has been established for over half a century. When the sherry got into a sales crisis, it was Mauricio González Gordon who successfully countered with new ideas. This also includes an annual premium collection. Thus the interest in sherry was able to grow again worldwide. The house has long since been operating sustainably. Further generations of the González family and the future of the company and its brands are well provided for.

**Meininger Outstanding Achievement Award:**

**Willi Bründlmayer, Weingut Bründlmayer**

The Austrian star winemaker Willi Bründlmayer from Langenlois receives the jury's prize of honour. "There is hardly any other winery where the whole appearance deserves the term world class as much as the Bründlmayer Winery", the laudation reads. Willi Bründlmayer deserves the title of "exceptional winemaker". As early as 40 years ago, he promoted organic viticulture because he was convinced that this

*Excellence  
in wine & spirit*  
**MEININGER AWARD**

was the best way to express the character of the varieties and sites in his wines. He was one of the first winegrowers to ensure a positive environmental balance of his business, at a time when the term "sustainability" was far from having the significance it has today. He is called one of Austria's leading wine pioneers, an "innovator with a fine sense for the spirit of the times". Top wines such as the famous Zöbinger Heiligenstein, a terraced south- to south-west facing vineyard, owe their classification as "Erste Lage" to Willi Bründlmayer, among others. For many years, he was one of the founders of the association "Traditionsweingüter Österreichs" (Traditional Wine Estates of Austria), to which many of the country's top vineyards belong. The art lover and connoisseur Willi Bründlmayer strives to create a "melody" in the cellar through the transformation of the natural product grown on living soil in the course of the wine-making process. Without his efforts, even the Winzersekt in Austria would not be what it is today. The winegrower was inspired to make sparkling wine by his wife, who comes from France, who runs the winery together with him and an experienced team.

**International Spirit Brand of the Year: Cointreau**

Cointreau, the spirits brand of the year, recently celebrated two anniversaries. The company was founded as a distillery by Adolphe Cointreau in Angers over 170 years ago in 1849, and the world-famous orange liqueur of the same name has been in existence for 135 years (1885). Orange flavours were particularly popular at that time and Edouard Cointreau succeeded in creating a very intense and at the same time less sweet liqueur compared to others, which is still a classic of the bar and cocktail culture today. Its square bottle has hardly changed since then, a sign of constancy and well-understood tradition. Because of course the company has moved with the times. Mixing cocktails and the associated hospitality culture have become a way of life for Cointreau. Skilful marketing and the clever addition of new flavours to the portfolio have contributed to the brand's success. Exclusive artists' editions, competitions and much more show the entire brand world in which Cointreau is anchored.

*Excellence  
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**MEININGER AWARD**

**About the MEININGER AWARD:**

For 20 years now, the Meininger Awards have been presented annually to international personalities in the national and international wine industry. Winners include Michel Torres, Gina Gallo, the Rothschild family, Fritz Keller or Christof Queisser, Rotkäppchen.

The organiser is the Meininger Verlag, which is managed in the 4th generation. The media house has specialised in wine and beverage publications and is the initiator of numerous events around trade fairs, congresses and international wine competitions.

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