



# 2016 NORTH OF THE GATE WINE COMPETITION JUDGES

## ZIGGY THE WINE GAL

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Ziggy “The Wine Gal” Eschlman is among America's most enthusiastic, authoritative and entertaining libation experts. For over 20 years, Ziggy has set and reported trends in all things to imbibe. Her award-winning radio shows are broadcast throughout wine country and stream live worldwide. She is a dynamic guest speaker, educator and presenter. Her credits include American Women in Radio and Television, Triangle Wine Experience, Gourmet Magazine-Gourmet Wine Cellar, MusExpo, New Orleans Wine and Food Experience, YWCA, Cinema Epicuria Film Festival, Sonoma County Tourism Bureau and Santa Rosa Junior College. She also leads seminars on whiskey, tequila, rum, vodka and a variety of spirits. As a professional wine and spirits judge and educator, Ziggy has judged competitions worldwide and developed programs for a diverse range of organizations including Gourmet Magazine, Benziger Family, Legrande Hospitality, Relish Culinary School, Beverage Builders, IBM, PepsiCo, KFC Inc., Meritage Alliance, Sonoma County Farm Bureau, Corner Alliance, Inc., and Sinclair Communications. [www.ziggythewinegal.com](http://www.ziggythewinegal.com)

## CAROL SHELTON

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Carol Shelton has had an illustrious 38-year career in the wine industry. While getting her Enology degree from UC Davis, Carol worked with Dr. Ann Noble, of Wine Aroma Wheel fame. As one of the first dozen women to receive her BS in Enology in 1978, Carol worked for Robert Mondavi, Saltram’s in Australia’s Barossa Valley, and in 1980 at Buena Vista, where she was mentored by the great Andre Tchelistcheff. As winemaker for Windsor Vineyards from 1981 till 2000, her wines drew great acclaim and she earned the title of “Most Awarded Winemaker in America” as well as “Winemaker of the Year” three times. Carol left Windsor in early 2000 to form Carol Shelton Wines with her husband, Mitch Mackenzie. Their goal is to craft small lots from carefully selected vineyards, with Zinfandel as their focus and passion.

## LARRY VAN AALST

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Sommelier, Equus Restaurant and Host of The Sonoma Report, CRN Digital Talk Radio the Equus Restaurant wine list was judged "Best of Show" in the 1995 and 1998 Sonoma County Harvest Fair. The Gallery of Sonoma County wines, nearly 300 bottles hand-picked by their winemakers, sets the tone — wine country splendor in a classic setting. Larry Van Aalst, Equus Sommelier, has been selecting wines for Equus for over a decade. Larry has been judging at the Cloverdale Citrus Fair/San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition for over a decade.

## DEBRA DEL FIORENTINO



Certified Specialist of Wine, Debra Del Fiorentino is a consummate wine professional who brings a dynamic energy and expertise to every endeavor she undertakes. Debra is a familiar face at numerous prestigious wine competitions. She currently holds the esteemed position of Director of Wine Competition for Vineyard & Winery Management, a producer of wine competitions for nearly 40 years with eight unique wine judgments. Born and raised in San Francisco, Debra is a second generation Italian from a large family that originally settled in the Napa Valley. After earning a Bachelor's Degree in Business from the University of California at Berkeley, Debra opened two gourmet food stores in Marin before venturing into the wine industry. Debra also serves as an independent wine educator and partner in Russian River Vineyards.

## KRISTI MOHAR



Kristi Mohar started in the grocery business in 1982. She has been the wine buyer for family owned Pacific Markets in Sonoma County for the past 16 years. She is very passionate about wine and is always willing to help and learn. During her tenure in the wine industry Kristi has judged numerous wine competitions and served on esteemed panels. Some of Kristi's credentials include San Francisco Wine Competition, Sonoma County Harvest Fair, Press Democrat "wine of the week" panel member, wine consultant to local wineries and retailers, and coordinator of the Pacific Market Wine Tent at the Sebastopol Apple Blossom Festival.

## ELLEN LANDIS



Ellen is a published Wine Writer, Certified Sommelier, Certified Wine Specialist, Wine Educator and Professional Wine Judge. She is the author of the blog [EllenOnWine.com](http://EllenOnWine.com) and writes for the AWS Wine Journal ([AmericanWineSociety.org](http://AmericanWineSociety.org)) among other publications. Ellen is a moderator for the highly acclaimed Vintner's Holidays annual event at the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite, and participates as a key speaker, moderator and panelist at various other wine events. For the past sixteen plus years, she and husband Ken co-owned award winning Landis Shores Oceanfront Inn where Ellen served as Wine Director and Sommelier. They recently sold their Inn to devote more time to the world of wine. Ellen was also a Sommelier at the Ritz Carlton for several years. Ellen has traveled many wine regions throughout North America including California, Oregon,

Washington, Virginia, Michigan, Ohio, Connecticut, New Mexico, Arizona, New York and Canada, and several international wine regions including Bordeaux, Champagne, Burgundy, Rhone, Tuscany, and wine regions throughout Spain, Portugal, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia. In addition to an MBA, Ellen's wine education includes UC Davis viticulture course work, CSW certification from the Society of Wine Educators program, and holds the credential of Certified Sommelier (CS) from the Court of Master Sommeliers. Ellen serves as a judge at numerous national and international wine competitions including the San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, Great Northwest Invitational Wine Competition, Finger Lakes International Wine Competition, Mid-American Wine Competition, Great Northwest Invitational Wine Competition, California State Fair Wine Competition, American Fine Wine Competition, Amador County Fair Wine Competition, Sonoma Harvest Fair Wine Competition, West Coast Wine Competition, Grand Harvest Wine Competition, Long Beach Grand Cru International Wine Competition, Riverside International Wine Competition, Michigan Wine & Spirits Competition, the Jefferson Cup Invitational Wine Competition, the Mendocino County Wine Competition, Monterey Wine Competition, and the Central Coast Wine Competition.

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