



NorCal Public Media Announces Date and Award Winners for the 3rd Annual Food & Wine Awards

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Northern California Public Media (NorCal) announces its 3rd Annual [NorCal Public Media Food & Wine Awards](#), celebrating individuals and organizations that exemplify excellence, innovation, and a commitment to the betterment of our local communities and environment through agriculture, viticulture, sustainability, education and compassion.. The event takes place Saturday, May 10th at the Jackson Theater, Sonoma Country Day School in Santa Rosa, CA.

NorCal is dedicated to shining a spotlight on environmental issues and their impact on our communities, and its [Center for Environmental Reporting](#) is supported in part by this fundraising event.

Local leaders and organizations within the agriculture, viticulture, food and wine industries play a pivotal role in fostering a positive impact on the environment, cultivating sustainable futures, and nurturing the well-being of people in our communities.

By recognizing these heroes and makers NorCal's hope is to instill lasting inspiration and positive change in our environments and communities.

The NorCal Public Media Food & Wine Awards won the 2024 Public Media Award for Best Community Special Event at the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA) conference.

From an impressive list of nominations submitted, the 2025 categories and Award Winners are:

EDUCATING FOR THE FUTURE

Susan Gilmore – North Bay Children's Center Garden of Eatin'.

NBCC was among the first early childhood education providers to recognize that nutrition education has a place in the daily curriculum of a childcare environment. The Garden of Eatin' Program instills healthy habits and weaves a culture of wellness into its preschool program by teaching children and their families, to make healthy food choices through a comprehensive, hands-on garden-based curriculum.

Susan Gilmore, founder and CEO, has led NBCC for 36 years and her innovative programs have spread to their multiple locations in Marin and Sonoma counties, always with the mission to ensure that all children, especially the most vulnerable, have access to critical early learning experiences that build the foundation for life-long success.

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Beyond the classroom, Susan has demonstrated exceptional leadership during times of crisis. During the 2017 Sonoma County wildfires, she led efforts to support families and teachers displaced from seven of NBCC's locations in evacuation areas. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, and schools closed, she worked closely with county emergency services to provide critical childcare for medical first responders and essential workers, ensuring NBCC adapted to meet the community's urgent needs.

Susan's commitment to addressing emerging challenges led her to present to the Early Care Climate Task Force, where her contributions and NBCC's innovative practices were featured in the Early Years Climate Action Plan. This plan highlights strategies to help children from birth to age eight thrive despite the growing impacts of climate-related events.

With a passion for collaboration and system change, Susan's entrepreneurial spirit has inspired transformative progress in early childhood education, creating brighter futures for children across all income levels.

LAND STEWARDS/REGENERATION

Elizabeth and Paul Kaiser – Singing Frogs Farm.

Singing Frogs is a small farm—just three cultivated acres—but the Kaisers are reaping BIG results using Regenerative Farming methods, with an impressive 5-7 harvests per year. Three basic principles guide what they do: 1) disturb the soil as little as possible, 2) keep a wide diversity of plants (about 140 different crops) in the ground as much as possible and 3) keep the ground covered and protected as much as possible throughout the year. The Kaisers have launched education workshops, consultations and farm tours to teach and share their successful practices.

Mimi and Peter Buckley – Front Porch Farm.

Established in 2010, Front Porch Farm is a 110-acre organic farm producing vegetables, fruit and cut flowers. They are an exemplary farm that highly values organic and regenerative farming principles as well as empowering their employees with competitive wages and benefits as well as an inclusive place for their family and friends. They are a model for soil health, high quality produce and cut flowers and most of all, empowering their employees with the same values and compensation for their contribution to making the world and community a better place.

AQUACULTURE/SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

John Finger and Terry Sawyer-Hog Island Oyster Company.

With John and Terry at the helm, Hog Island Oyster Co. is one of the nation's leading producers of certified sustainable shellfish and a pioneer in "bay to bar" restaurants and focusing on the long-term sustainability of locally produced shellfish. In 2011 Hog Island became one of the premier Food Alliance Certified Sustainable Shellfish Producers.

Since 2012, Hog Island has partnered with U.C. Davis, Bodega Marine Labs, in monitoring the levels and impacts of Ocean Acidification in Tomales Bay. In 2015, they joined a global community of businesses as the first B-Corp Certified shellfish company. Hog Island is also working with

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restoration scientists and shellfish growers and the Native Olympia Oyster Collaborative to bring back native oysters once beloved by the coast Miwok and other Native American communities, both in the wild and on farms and restaurant menus.

FOOD EQUITY

Judith and Chanowk Yisrael - Yisrael Farms

Yisrael Farms started as a half-acre urban farm nestled in the heart of Sacramento and has now grown to multiple locations. Their farm is a sustainable community resource, a story of love, perseverance, and reverence for the earth's rhythms.

Their neighborhood is a historically working-class area now battling food apartheid, poverty, and gentrification. It's a familiar story for communities of color. The Yisraels decided to flip the narrative. In ten years, these city slickers transformed their yard into a half-acre farm, fed hundreds of people, taught thousands more and have found that the answers are in the soil.

Yisrael Family Urban Farm is located on a double lot in the South Oak Park neighborhood of Sacramento, at the home of owners Judith and Chanowk Yisrael. South Oak Park is one of Sacramento's underserved communities; it has been called a "food desert," with more fast-food outlets than places selling healthy food.

Yisrael farm produces healthy food for the Yisrael family and their community. More importantly, Chanowk and Judith help to grow a healthy community by sharing their skills and knowledge, offering classes, workshops and programs for youth, and teaching others how to grow their own food and cook healthy meals. Their mission is to "transform the hood for G.O.O.D." (G.O.O.D. stands for "Growing our own Destiny") using urban agriculture as a tool for community engagement, empowerment and employment. They demonstrate the benefits of growing your own food and principles of cultivation of the soil which they share with their local community and the world.

Michael Dimock – Roots of Change

Roots of Change brings a diverse range of Californians to the table to build a common interest in food and farming so that every aspect of our food - from the time it's grown to the time it's eaten - can be healthy, safe, profitable, affordable and fair.

Since 2006, Executive Director Michael Dimock has been spawning and leading education and policy campaigns, community dialogues and creative engagements with government and corporate leaders to advance regenerative food and farm policies and practices that make agriculture and food enterprises solutions to critical public health challenges of the 21st century.



HUMANITARIAN AWARD

Chef Martin Yan

Chef Martin Yan, celebrated for his pioneering television show *Yan Can Cook*, has not only contributed to the global appreciation of Chinese cuisine but also dedicated significant efforts to philanthropy. Through culinary education, cultural exchange, and community support, he uses his platform to make a positive impact.

Yan frequently participates in charity events, cooking demonstrations, and fundraising activities to support causes like hunger relief, disaster recovery, and educational programs. His passion for education is evident in his efforts to mentor young chefs, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds, by promoting culinary arts as a path to opportunity and empowerment. He partners with culinary schools, nonprofit organizations, and international cultural initiatives to teach the value of preserving heritage through food.

Additionally, Yan champions diversity and cultural understanding, leveraging his international influence to foster global culinary appreciation. His work has extended to advocating for sustainability in the food industry, emphasizing the importance of respecting natural resources while celebrating traditional cooking methods.

Chef Yan's philanthropic spirit exemplifies his motto, "If Yan can cook, so can you!" encouraging not only cooking skills but also compassion and community engagement.

GRAND AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP

The Sterling Family - Iron Horse Vineyard & Winery

Audrey and Barry Sterling, partners in everything since meeting at Stanford University, first saw Iron Horse Vineyards in a driving rainstorm in 1976 with the vineyard development only partially completed. There was no winery, and the 19th century carpenter gothic house was dramatically listing to one side. Somehow they still decided their dreams had come true.

Today, three generations of the Sterling Family live on the property, ranging in age from 29 to 92. In the vineyards, winery, gardens, lifestyle, and community life, the Sterlings strive to give back more than they take out.

Iron Horse is certified sustainable and regenerative by the Sonoma County Wine Growers. They use all recycled water in the vineyards and are engaged in a multi-year, multi-million-dollar salmon habitat restoration project with Fish and Wildlife on their section of Green Valley Creek. Iron Horse is part of a pilot program with the California Land Stewardship Institute to study the positive role of vineyards in climate change and the benefits of regenerative agricultural practices – like planting cover crops and low till soil conservation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote healthy soils, and help sequester carbon.

For nearly 50 years, the Sterlings have considered both the vintage at hand and the long-term needs of the land, the employees and the community in everything they do.



ABOUT THE EVENT

Ticket sales for the NorCal Public Media Food & Wine Awards support the PBS, NPR and independent public television stations and streaming services provided to the Bay Area by NorCal Public Media, and their work in reporting on the environment, climate change issues and solutions.

At this year's event, attendees will enjoy a special menu of small bites sourced from local farms, prepared by Chef Daniel Kedan—awarded restaurateur, farm-to-table instructor at the Culinary Institute of America, and a previous Award Winner at the 2nd Annual event. He'll be assisted by a small army of culinary students from high schools, colleges and culinary programs volunteering their help.

Starting with a welcome glass of sparkling wine and a Hog Island oyster on arrival, attendees will sample an array of wine, beer and craft beverages served by local producers donating their time and products, and mingle with the Award Winners.

Attendees can bid in a Silent Auction and a Live Auction with exciting food, wine and travel packages which will also raise money for the Center for Environmental Reporting at NorCal Public Media.

Ceremonies will be hosted this year by Clark Wolf, one of America's top restaurant consultants, food writers and speakers and the host of [Savoring Sonoma](#) on NorCal's NPR station, KRCB 104.9FM, with previous Award Winners presenting this year's Awards.

Tickets open February 1 and will include a specially priced *Bring A Mom* ticket since the event takes place the day before Mother's Day.

For more information, visit Norcalpublicmedia.org/Awards.

A limited number of press tickets are available on request. Images and further information are available.

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