

Women OF THE VINE & SPIRITS™

ABOUT WOMEN OF THE VINE & SPIRITS

Women of the Vine & Spirits (WOTVS) began when President, Deborah Brenner, researched and wrote the bestselling book, *Women of the Vine: Inside the World of Women Who Make, Taste, and Enjoy Wine*. As a former executive and 20-year veteran of the television and film industries, Brenner was familiar with the disenchantment of working in a male-dominated industry. As she interviewed women in the wine industry for the book, her commitment to telling their stories galvanized the group as a force whose talents and collective experience could not be ignored.

Brenner harnessed this energy and enthusiasm (which grew far beyond that of the subjects of her book) and organized the inaugural Women of the Vine & Spirits Global Symposium in Napa in April, 2015, which featured informative sessions on leadership, marketing/branding, and the particular challenges that face women in the wine and spirits industry. With over 500 attendees from 5 countries, the Symposium set the stage for the launch of the Women of the Vine & Spirits Alliance, a membership-based trade organization that exists to support, advance, and connect women in the alcohol beverage industry worldwide through education, advocacy, training, mentorship, and steadfast confidence in the value of women at every position in the field.

DEBORAH BRENNER, PRESIDENT & FOUNDER

Originally from Rockland County, New York, Deborah Brenner came to be President of the Women of the Vine & Spirits Alliance via a circuitous path that includes passions for science, art, stories and people.

Fresh out of the University of Delaware with degrees in English and Journalism, Ms. Brenner was hired by a television and film technology company that required her to travel internationally to cultures in which wine is a part of everyday life. After over 20 years in the male-dominated field of high-end technology and owning a marketing and public relations firm, a fortuitous trip to Napa and Sonoma showed Ms. Brenner that women in the wine industry – like her own – were extremely under-recognized.

“It was from that point on that I felt compelled to tell their stories,” she says, the result of which would be her bestselling collection of profiles on women in the wine industry, *Women of the Vine: Inside the World of Women who Make, Taste and Enjoy Wine*. *Wine Spectator* would name the book one of its Critical Reads for 2007.

Through the process of writing the book and championing its subjects, Ms. Brenner became inspired to take a further leap in developing the two-day Women of the Vine & Spirits Global Symposium in April, 2015. Overwhelmed by a sold-out attendance of 500 women from five countries – and their demand for more education, tools, and camaraderie – Ms. Brenner launched the first-of-its-kind Women of the Vine & Spirits trade alliance in September, 2015, and opened membership to all women professionals across the alcohol beverage industry, including wine, spirits and beer.

Ms. Brenner has received a Rising Star Award from Women for WineSense (2008), a New York Small Business Administration Women in Business Champion Of The Year (2009), a New York City National Association of Women Business Owners Signature Award (2010), the Lillian Vernon Award for Outstanding Community Service by the Women's Enterprise Development Center (2011), a NY Women in Communications Rising Star Award (2013), and the Rockland Business Women's Network Woman of the Year Award (2014). She is also a member of Senator Gillibrand's NY Agriculture Working Group.

“I have met the most incredible people along my journey,” says Deborah Brenner, “and they gave me the energy to persevere against a lot of odds as an entrepreneur. Women of the Vine & Spirits is nurtured by shared passions for this industry and the spirit of empowerment.”

FAQs

1. How is Women of the Vine & Spirits different from Women in WineSense or A Woman's Palate?
Both Women for WineSense and A Woman's Palate are volunteer-based organizations focused on educating women consumers about wine, while Women of the Vine & Spirits is a trade alliance solely focused on supporting, advancing and connecting women employed in the industry. Women of the Vine & Spirits welcomes women from all sectors of the alcohol beverage industry.
2. Why does an organization like WOTVS need to exist?
WOTVS fills a void in the alcohol beverage industry. There has never been a forum for women in all sectors of the industry to come together to foster diversity initiatives and to ensure the next generation is being mentored to take leadership roles.
3. Who are the members of the WOTVS Advisory Board?
Members of the WOTVS Advisory Board include professionals from across the alcohol beverage industry, including senior executives, marketing and public relations professionals, journalists, educators, sommeliers, exporters and distributors. The full list of Advisory Board members can be found at <http://www.womenofthevine.com/team/advisory-board>
4. Why do I have to pay to participate in WOTVS?

The Women of the Vine & Spirits Alliance consists of two entities: the Women of the Vine & Spirits Alliance, a for-profit professional trade alliance and the Women of the Vine & Spirits Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Founded in 2015, the WOTVS Foundation was formed to support young women in the pursuit of careers in the alcohol beverage industry; and the Foundation Scholarship Fund is dedicated to celebrating the achievements and advancement of women in the business by awarding recipients opportunities to pursue their education in the industry.

Membership dues and the annual WOTVS Global Symposium are critical to the bottom line of the alliance's daily operations and efforts. Both the alliance and foundation work hand-in-hand making a positive difference for women, while conscientiously maintaining the legal and ethical boundaries required by the different structures.

5. What does membership do for me?

Membership with the Women of the Vine & Spirits Alliance provides members with a supportive environment of women committed to helping each other. Specific benefits include:

- a strong network of colleagues
- professional development and advancement
- finding or being a mentor
- establishing a personal brand
- the career development resource center
- access to membership directory and contact information
- access to members-only job board
- access to members' discussion forum
- discount or free entrance to all WOTVS events
- company profile in the WOTVS membership directory
- member profile in the WOTVS membership directory
- priority speaking opportunities
- priority opportunities to host WOTVS regional network events