

# Vineyard & Winery Management

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**I**n 2013 we launched our “20 Most Admired” issue to shine a much-deserved spotlight on the most admired people in the North American wine industry. With the thoughtful input of our nominating committee – comprised of respected winemakers, grapegrowers, wine writers, educators, buyers, sommeliers and consultants across North America – we celebrated wine professionals from just about every aspect of the industry.

This year, we’re highlighting the 20 Most Admired Winemakers.

Our committee had just two rules to follow: 1) nominees must be living; 2) they must be based in North America. While some committee members quickly returned short-lists of their winemaking heroes, others agonized over how to whittle down their nominees to less than 50.

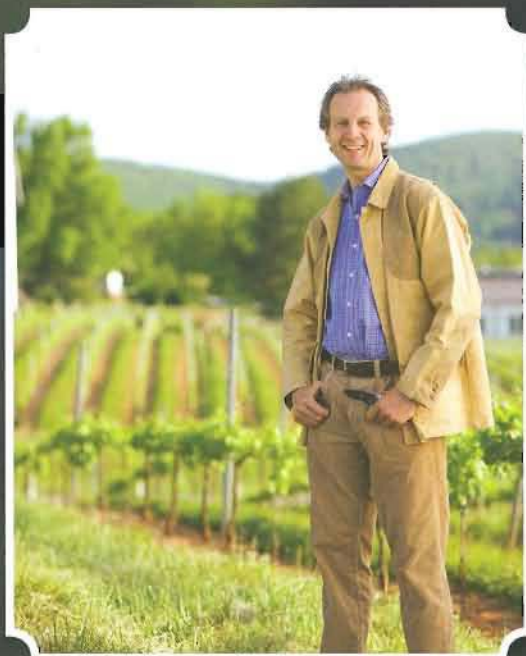
Once the nominations were in, we reduced the field of contenders to 40 finalists, based on the number of nominations each person received. Names of the finalists were then submitted to the committee for a vote (members could vote for as many people as they liked.)

The 20 winemakers who came out on top reflect a wide range of wines, styles and regions. Some produce hundreds of thousands of cases each year; some make only a couple thousand. While many craft some of North America’s finest wines and represent the continent’s most successful wineries, there are many other reasons to admire the men and women on our 2014 list. These are the pioneers; the innovators; the trend-buckers; the standard-setters and the leaders.

Here, in alphabetical order, are the Most Admired Winemakers in North America.

# Luca Paschina

Barboursville Vineyards



For 23 years, Italian native Luca Paschina has produced the wines at Virginia's Barboursville Vineyards near Charlottesville, earning the winery numerous gold medals, as well as prestigious Governor's Cup and Monticello Cup awards. He's a long way from the Piemonte vineyards in which he played as a child, yet Paschina has embraced Virginia as his home, and the state has enthusiastically embraced him back.

Before landing in Virginia, the third-generation winemaker produced wine in the Finger Lakes region of New York and California's Napa Valley. He sold wine in Switzerland for two years before returning to Italy to work in vineyards with his father and uncle.

In 1991, he officially joined Barboursville, after Gianni Zonin hired Paschina to spend a year consulting at his winery. Zonin, the heir to Italy's largest family-owned wine company (Casa Vinicola Zonin), purchased the land in 1976 and – ignoring advice from government officials, land owners and bankers to plant tobacco on the property – developed a vineyard near Thomas Jefferson's Monti-

cello. When Paschina returned to Zonin's offices near Venice, his recommendation was not likely one the vineyard owner wanted to hear. Paschina recommended that Zonin start over by investing in ideal trellising systems and farming techniques. Zonin agreed, and hired Paschina full time to see the project through.

Paschina made it his first priority to determine which grape varieties, clones and trellises were best suited to the red clay soils and humid, often wet growing conditions of the area. Over time, he determined that the conditions favored cabernet franc, merlot and viognier, and that cabernet sauvignon can be excellent, particularly in warmer vintages. In recent years, Italian varieties nebbiolo, sangiovese and vermentino have emerged as stars, as has a moscato-style wine called Phileo, produced from traminer and muscat ottonel.

Paschina's efforts clearly paid off. Barboursville Cabernet Franc and Bordeaux-style Octagon red blend were served at a gala the night before President Obama's first inauguration in 2009; the toast was made with Barboursville Brut.

Paschina's attention to detail and experience have brought out the best in Virginia grapes, and other producers have taken note. Zonin's financial support hasn't hurt, either. With more than 250 wineries in the state, Virginia has gained national and international praise for its wines, and Paschina deserves much of the credit.

"Luca Paschina has spent the last quarter century setting the standard – and pushing the envelope – for Virginia's rise in prominence as the most exciting region in what I call 'The New American Wine,'" said wine writer Dave McIntyre. "He produces wine at a high quality level on a commercial scale, and as such has been Virginia's leading wine ambassador to the world."