

# “I Love This Industry From the Bottom of My Heart,” Says Heidi Scheid, Person of the Year | Wine Enthusiast’s 2020 Wine Star Awards

BY WINE ENTHUSIAST



*Heidi Scheid / Photo by Elizabeth Fall*

## Executive Vice President, Scheid Family Wines; Chairperson, Wine Market Council

“I love this industry from the bottom of my heart,” says Heidi Scheid. “To bring wine into the everyday lives of Americans—I just really believe in that mission.”

When Scheid first came on board at Scheid Family Wines as the director of planning in 1992, the Salinas Valley-based estate was a grape-growing and -selling venture. Taking on the executive vice president role in 2017, Scheid has overseen the company’s quick

evolution into an estate vineyard and winery that now produces a broad portfolio of its own-labeled wines as well as a series of private labels for retail clients.

Outside the family business, Scheid is the current chairperson for the Wine Market Council— an organization that provides wine market knowledge, trends and insights to its industry members.

“It is so valuable to midsized wineries who can’t afford to have their own research and development department,” she says.

A midsized-winery executive herself, Scheid understands the value of utilizing market data to grow. For her, it’s important for that growth to be sustainable.

“My responsibility has been helping to lead that evolution from a supplier to other wineries to a producer that’s on the global map bringing bottled goods to the marketplace,” she tells *Wine Enthusiast*.

According to Scheid, in under 10 years, Scheid Family Wines went from producing a modest 4,000 cases to 600,000 cases annually. Under her watch, the Scheid family has also increased its vineyard holdings to 12 estate-owned sites, totaling 4,000 acres of vines—all of which are certified sustainable and working toward organic certifications.

“One of our core values is continuous improvement, and for us, the next step is obtaining organic certification on 100% of our vineyards by 2025,” Scheid says.

With that spirit of improvement, Scheid Family Wines’ estate winery turned its attention to employee and consumer health. It achieved British Retail Consortium (BRC) certification in 2016 and was noted as one of the first wineries in North America to earn this accreditation known for having the highest level of food safety protocols.



*Photo by Elizabeth Fall*

Having this certification, Scheid says, has helped the business act as a leader in terms of how to operate in a pandemic.

“We have all the audit procedures in place: a sanitation team, wine quality control and documented traceability of all products from vine to bottle.” The rigorous standards allow the business to ensure it provides clean, safe products to their clientele as well as maintain a healthy work environment for all employees.

Scheid Family Wines’ newest label, Sunny with a Chance of Flowers, is a low-calorie wine. “The research validated to us and our business partners that ... the ‘better-for-you’ category is real,” Scheid says.

“In this business, it’s hard to become a big player. It’s hard to create a brand from zero and go to a million,” she says, “But we’re a scrappy company. And you have to be scrappy in such a competitive marketplace.”

For her dedication to responsible growth, consumer health and employee safety, *Wine Enthusiast* is proud to award Heidi Scheid as our Person of the Year. —Stacy Briscoe

