

Vintage Wine Estate President, Terry Wheatley, Keynote Speaker for Wine & Weed Symposium 2021—"There will definitely be some 100% not politically correct storytelling."

By **Stacy Briscoe** - July 20, 2021

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Terry Wheatley is not just the [first female president](#) of [Vintage Wine Estates](#) (VWE), she's also the first female president in the wine industry to take a [company public](#). This, she says, is the highlight of her career. "As I rose in my career over the years, I made it a goal to break some plates and open doors for women coming up after me. ... I share this with many other top female leaders in our business who have also forged the way," Wheatley comments during an interview with *Wine Industry Advisor*.



Terry Wheatley, president at Vintage Wine Estates

If that all isn't impressive enough, as of 2020, Wheatley is also serving as the chairwoman of the board for [CannaCraft](#), which represents one of the largest portfolios of cannabis brands and products. It's a position she says complements—not competes—with her wine industry career and goals. "Although our two cultures—wine and cannabis—may differ in many ways, one thing VWE and CannaCraft share is a focus on growth, innovation and the customer experience," says Wheatley. "I think the founders of both companies—Pat Roney for VWE and Ned Fussell and Dennis Hunter for CannaCraft—share a similar entrepreneurial spirit and a commitment to deliver to the customer. That's the kind of leadership we need to move both of our industries forward."

On a dual personal and professional level, Wheatley says becoming a part of the cannabis culture has afforded her an opportunity to expand her market and branding experiences, allowing her to create "new ideas for how cannabis and wine can work together on the beverage side."

"I think one area of improvement for the cannabis industry is branding and packaging which is one of my favorite wheelhouses, so I expect to have a lot of fun with that," she says.

Indeed, when asked about some of her long-term goals as president of VWE, Wheatley specifically mentions a wine-weed platform, including CBD and wine beverage concepts and "exploring the synergies in that space."

Of course, Wheatley is privy to the back-and-forth struggles between the two industries that compete for consumer attention as well as natural resources as cannabis products and plantings continue to increase.

"Problem-solving is needed from both sides," Wheatley argues. "More exploration needs to happen regarding terpenes and how they may affect grapes and address that the pungent aroma can be disruptive to winegrowing neighbors. We need to understand more about how spray drift might affect cannabis—cannabis is strictly regulated in that regard. It's going to take a lot of creativity and innovation to sort these things out."

When it comes to market-sharing, Wheatley believes that the "reality" is there will always be consumers who prefer one product over the other, but also those who can and will enjoy both. "That's where the intersection will be the most powerful," Wheatley says.

—Stacy Briscoe

Join Terry Wheatley for the 2021 [Wine & Weed Symposium](#), scheduled for August 5 at the Hyatt Regency in Santa Rosa, Calif. In her keynote address, Wheatley promises, "There will definitely be some 100% not politically correct storytelling." [Register here](#).

Stacy Briscoe



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Stacy Briscoe is a Sonoma-based freelance wine journalist as well as the managing editor of Wine Industry Advisor. Outside of the Advisor, she produces content for publications such as *Wine Enthusiast*, *Sonoma Magazine*, *PIX*, *SevenFifty Daily*, among many others. Briscoe also speaks at wine industry conferences, judges wine competitions, and is a WSET Diploma candidate, studying through the Napa Valley Wine Academy. She has her Bachelor of Arts in English-Language Literature from the University of California Santa Cruz and is often found with a book in hand (and a glass of

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