

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **SOCIETY OF WINE EDUCATORS ANNOUNCES AWARDS**

Academic excellence honored by Banfi Vintners and The Wine Appreciation Guild

**July 2005, Washington, DC** – Continuing its dedication to professional growth within the wine industry, The Society of Wine Educators announces two prestigious annual awards given to successful candidates who passed the challenging Certified Wine Educator (CWE) exam in 2004. Both awards are based on exam score. The Banfi Award recipient is Koichi Fukukita of Nakahara, Japan, and the Wine Appreciation Guild winner is Marc Pisan of Healdsburg, California.

The Society of Wine Educators — the leading international nonprofit organization to offer certification programs, seminars and events to wine industry professionals — created the CWE exam in 1980 as a way for advanced wine professionals to test their understanding of wines of the world, wine service and storage, and sensory identification of wine components. The exam lasts four hours and consists of three parts: one multiple-choice exam and essay, and two practical exercises involving wine identification and wine faults.

As the Banfi Award winner, Fukukita passed all three sections of the CWE exam in one sitting and scored highest among the 45 candidates. He receives a monetary gift of \$2500 to put toward travel, lodging and conference fees for the 2005 annual conference in Vancouver, Canada. The Banfi award has been offered since 1986 by leading US wine importer Banfi Vintners, a firm consistently devoted to educating its customers and employees. Banfi dedicated the scholarship to the memory of its late Vice President and Chief Wine Taster, Lucio Sorré, who was also elected SWE president just before his untimely passing. Family owned and operated, Banfi imports the wines of Castello Banfi, Vigne Regali, Placido, Cecchi, Sartori, Riunite and Florio of Italy; Concha y Toro, Walnut Crest of Chile; and Stonehaven of Australia.

"My family has always believed in the value of education, the support that students deserve, and the importance of understanding wine's role in moderation as part of a healthy diet. We are proud to support the efforts of the Society of Wine Educators and the achievements of these new CWEs," said James Mariani, family proprietor of leading US importer Banfi Vintners.

The second award recognizes the candidate receiving the second highest score on all three exam sections and is donated by The Wine Appreciation Guild - a publisher and distributor of books, educational materials and accessories based in South San Francisco, CA. The Guild will present Pisan, who is the Director of Sales at Michel Schlumberger Winery in the Dry Creek Valley of California, with a gift voucher for \$500 worth of educational materials.

SWE will host a Grand Awards Dinner, Friday, August 5, 2005 at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. Awardees are yet to be formally announced, though a special award will be given for the movie "*Sideways*."

#### **About the Society of Wine Educators:**

Established in 1977, SWE is the leading professional association of wine educators in the United States to offer certification programs. The programs involve rigorous individual study of principal wine topics, including vinification and viticulture, and are geared toward wine professionals of different levels. The Certified Specialist of Wine (CSW) exam is recommended for beginning and intermediate level wine professionals seeking to master a core body of knowledge. The Certified Wine Educator (CWE) exam tests advanced wine professionals to build upon their understanding of wines of the world, wine service and storage, and sensory identification of wine components. The Society also hosts an annual conference, featuring seminars, tastings, tours and awards recognition. The **29<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference** will be held at the **Fairmont Hotel in Vancouver, Canada, August 1-6, 2005**. Educators and enophiles choose from over 30 seminars and tours such as the Okanagan Valley wineries and local culinary gems - all tied to the 2005 theme, *An International Wine Adventure*. Last year, over 500 people from around the globe attended the conference in Sonoma, CA. Past locations have included Bellevue, Washington; Eugene, Oregon - among many other wine regions. The Society of Wine Educators is **now accepting registration for the conference**. Single-day or full-conference registration options are available for wine professionals and enthusiasts alike. Costs for the main conference are \$600 for members and \$660 for non-members.

More information is online at <http://www.wine.gurus.com/2005conference/index.html>

For questions, contact the national office in Washington DC at 202-347-5677 or email [conference@societyofwineeducators.org](mailto:conference@societyofwineeducators.org).

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