

FOUNDERS OF COME OVER OCTOBER CAMPAIGN NOMINATED FOR PRESTIGIOUS WINE ENTHUSIAST "PERSON OF THE YEAR" WINE STAR AWARD



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COME TOGETHER—A Community for Wine →
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Nomination in Recognition of Wine Advocacy Campaign that has Galvanized the Wine Community and is Reaching Wine Drinkers with Positive Messages about Wine

NEW YORK, Sept. 10, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, [Wine Enthusiast](#) announced nominees for the 2025 [Wine Star Awards](#). Among industry luminaries vying for the prestigious awards, the founders of the "[Come Over October](#)" wine advocacy campaign – Karen MacNeil, Kimberly Noelle Charles and Gino Colangelo – were collectively nominated for "Person of the Year." This category nominee is defined as 'an individual who has made significant and remarkable contributions to the advancement of the wine, spirits and beverage industry through their leadership and vision.' Karen, Kimberly and Gino, three wine communication professionals who took it upon themselves to advocate for the entire wine community in the face of unprecedented headwinds, are thus strong candidates for this honor.

Jacki Strum, President & Publisher at Wine Enthusiast Media, explained the reason for the nomination of the Come Over October team and why Wine Enthusiast has been among the campaign's earliest and largest supporters. "The Wine Star Awards are the industry standard for achievement and distinction in the wine industry. Karen, Kimberly and Gino certainly fit that definition based on their wine advocacy work," said Jacki. "When we first heard about the Come Over October campaign, we realized its potential because of the clarity and simplicity of the

message: Wine brings people together. We also understood the need for a campaign to introduce more Americans to wine culture, which is the mission of Come Over October."

TIME Magazine called Karen MacNeil, "America's Missionary of the Vine" and Karen has been named one of the "100 Most Influential People in Wine in the United States." She is the author of the award-winning book, [THE WINE BIBLE](#), which has sold more than a million copies. "This nomination has touched our hearts," said Karen MacNeil. "Come Over October started as a tiny spark of an idea born of three people's passion for wine. That spark has gone on to ignite the entire wine industry. Come Over October reminds us why we all love wine—because it reminds us of what matters: friendship, generosity, authenticity, and human connection."

Kimberly Noelle Charles' name is synonymous with wine marketing at its best level. Over her 40-year career she and her team have, through her creative marketing strategies, versatility and natural story-telling gifts, helped brands attain a level of distinction and draw in the marketplace. Charles stated, "We are truly honored by this recognition. With our collective experience in the wine world, we've seen challenging times before, but we remain firm in our belief that wine is the world's most civilized, communal, and memory-making beverage. We all have very busy day jobs, but have given this campaign, in its second year, our best creativity and energy. It has resonated well beyond U.S. borders, going from a campaign to a movement."

Founder of industry-leading wine and spirits communications agency, [Colangelo & Partners](#), Gino also has many years of experience in retail, giving him unique insights into consumer behavior that impact the work his agency does on behalf of their domestic and global clientele. He commented, "Together with Karen and Kimberly, we want to thank the Strum family who were among our very first supporters and helped us believe in the viability of our campaign in the earliest days when we needed the support most." Gino continued, "Going back more than two years, it became clear to me that wine was under attack and needed advocacy. After exploring various avenues for supporting the wine community, I was fortunate to partner with Karen and Kimberly on the creation of the Come Over October campaign, which has captured the imagination of the wine community as well as wine drinkers across the US."

"The beauty and strength of Come Over October lies in the simplicity of the message: Wine brings people together," added Adam Strum, Founder and Chairman of Wine Enthusiast Companies. "I think it's remarkable that three individuals, working purely as a mission-driven project of passion, have been able to coalesce an industry and make such an impact in a relatively short amount of time. Wine Enthusiast is proud to be among the first supporters of this powerful campaign."

About Wine Enthusiast

[Wine Enthusiast Companies](#) is a Certified B Corporation and the ultimate source of innovation and information around wine. Founded in 1979 by Adam and Sybil Strum, the family-owned company is composed of Wine Enthusiast Commerce and Wine Enthusiast Media. Wine Enthusiast Shop provides premium wine-lifestyle products, reaching millions of consumers globally via direct mail, an e-commerce site, and a business-to-business division. *Wine Enthusiast* magazine is an award-winning print publication and online resource that showcases wine news, food trends, and more than 25,000 ratings and reviews annually. Wine Enthusiast events include the annual premier Wine Star Awards gala. In 2024, the company launched a travel division, which includes the Tasting Room Directory and Cork+Compass Travel. Together, Wine Enthusiast Companies is the indisputable hub for everything wine. We bring wine to life.

About Wine Enthusiast's Wine Star Awards

Each year, [Wine Enthusiast](#) celebrates the most influential members of the wine, spirits, and beverage world at the annual [Wine Star Awards](#). This year marks the 26th anniversary of honoring the individuals and companies that make outstanding contributions to the industry. There are 16 categories for the 2025 Wine Star Awards. Four of the categories will have a named winner. The other 12 categories include a list of nominees exemplifying dedication and innovation to the success and growth of the wine, spirits, and beverage sector. The nominees were nominated by members of the Wine Enthusiast media team, including the global sales, events, marketing and editorial divisions. The 2025 Wine Star Award winners will be honored at the 26th annual black-tie gala in January 2026.

About Come Over October

Come Over October is a mission-driven advocacy campaign that encompasses all wine – domestic and international, entry-level to collectible – and seeks to engage wine drinkers (and potential wine drinkers) with positive messages about wine. The campaign is executed by COME TOGETHER—A Community for Wine Inc, a company committed to creating and sharing positive, inclusive consumer information about moderate wine consumption and wine's historic role as a communal beverage. The company was formed in May 2024 by three wine industry professionals who are donating their time and efforts to the company and its projects and events—wine journalist Karen MacNeil, and public relations and communications executives, Gino Colangelo and Kimberly Noelle Charles, DipWSET.

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