

For Immediate Release

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## 2017 Market Watch Leaders Awards Salute Top Retailers in Wine, Spirits & Beer

New York, N.Y. (September 15, 2017)—New York's St. Regis Hotel hosted the biggest players in the drinks industry last night for Market Watch magazine's much-anticipated annual Leaders Awards Dinner. These prestigious awards pay tribute to the country's most progressive wine, spirits and beer retailers.

"The 2017 Leaders honorees are visionaries who push the boundaries in innovation, significantly contributing to their company's success," said Marvin R. Shanken, Editor and Publisher, Market Watch. "Congratulations to all of our winners for their tremendous accomplishments in an increasingly competitive retail environment."

**Stew Leonard, Jr. of Stew Leonard's Wines & Spirits in Norwalk, Conn.**, was honored as 2017's "Retailer of the Year." Originally a grocery retailer in the New York tri-state area for decades, Stew Leonard's entered beverage alcohol industry in 1999. Today its nine locations rake in more \$100 million in annual sales.



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The Awards' other top honor, "Industry Executive of the Year," went to **Robert Sands, President and CEO, Constellation Brands**. Through a flurry of M&A activity, Sands has driven expansion in beer, wine and spirits. In 2016 alone, Constellation sold more than 40 million cases of wine and is the second largest wine company in the world. It is also the number three player in the US beer market and significantly expanded its spirits portfolio.

Ten retailers from six stores—the cream of the crop in beverage alcohol retailing—were named Market Watch Leaders this year:

• **Glen Knight and Jim Knight, The Wine House, Los Angeles:** Building on their father's legacy, the two brothers have curated a cutting edge collection of wines, adapting successfully to today's market.

- **Tim Turner, Walgreens, Deerfield, Ill.:** As the category manager for wine and spirits, Turner oversees a billion-dollar beverage alcohol program across 8,200 locations.
- **Steve Sternberger, Adam Sternberger and Elizabeth McCabe, White Horse Wine & Spirits, Absecon, NJ:** This family owned business in the outskirts of Atlantic City went from a small liquor store to one of New Jersey's premier retailers, with upwards of \$10 million in annual sales.
- **Dan Schuette, H-E-B, San Antonio:** As the director of chain's 330 stores, Schuette has played a major role in making the grocery giant a billion dollar player in the beverage alcohol industry.
- **Chris Zaborowski and Richard Splan, Westport Whiskey & Wine, Louisville, Ky.:** These co-owners built a retail destination that has become the epicenter for spirits and wine education in Bourbon country.
- **Warren Scheidt, Cork Liquors, Columbus, Ind.:** The co-owner of this 12-unit Indiana chain navigates a competitive market with low prices and a tailored selection of beer, spirits and wine.

Market Watch's Leaders Alumni Awards also highlighted five past honorees:

- **Saurabh Abrol, Wine Chateau, Metuchen, N.J.** took home "Best Marketing" for a \$36 million operation with four locations and a major online presence.
- **Bruce Dierking, Hazel's Beverage World, Boulder, Colo.** received the "Best Website" recognition with annual sales exceeding \$30 million in five years.

- **Kent Starr, Liquor World, Fayetteville, Ark.** earned the “Community Service” honor for his long running efforts in philanthropy with a focus on children’s organizations.

The Leaders Awards Dinner also saluted some standouts on the supplier side. **Prophecy** from E & J Gallo Winery won “Best New Product” in the wine category; **Crown Royal Vanilla** from Diageo North America was recognized for “Best New Product in Spirits.” The “Spirits Brand of the Year” went to Diageo for **Bulleit**, while **19 Crimes** from Treasury Wine Estates was named “Wine Brand of the Year.”

#### **About M. Shanken Communications**

Headquartered in New York City, with offices in Napa Valley, M. Shanken Communications is the publisher of some of America’s most influential lifestyle magazines including *Wine Spectator*, *Cigar Aficionado* and *Whisky Advocate*, as well as trade publications such as *Market Watch*, *Shanken’s Impact Newsletter* and *Shanken News Daily*. M. Shanken Communications also publishes a series of annual research reports on the U.S. wine and distilled spirits markets. The company is a family-owned business that takes great pride in the many charitable endeavors it supports, raising more than \$50 million over the past 40 years. For more information, visit M. Shanken Communications’ website at [www.mshanken.com](http://www.mshanken.com).

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