



Wine industry CEO retires after 22 years

For release 5 August 2017

Judith Kennedy AM has announced her retirement from her role as CEO of The Association of Australian Boutique Winemakers Inc (AABW) and the Boutique Wine Show after 22 years.

In 1996, retired film producer Judith Kennedy entered the wine industry with the plan to establish a platform for the 'small winemakers'. "Their production may be miniscule compared with the major wine players, but their contribution to the industry is mammoth on many levels," she said. "I thought it was important they be able to enter wine shows so they could receive their due recognition – and so the AABW and the Boutique Wine Show were born."

The Association of Australian Boutique Winemakers Inc (AABW) was founded and the Boutique Wine Show was popular from the first year. It became apparent that the boutique winemakers welcomed the opportunity to enter their own show; be judged by top professionals; and have the chance to win trophies and medals for their efforts.

Huon Hooke, Gary Baldwin and Peter Bourne formed the first judging panel, and Hooke and Baldwin have stayed with the show, without break, for the duration.

Over 22 years, Kennedy has been involved in 90 wine festivals, degustation dinners, lunches and master classes in Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

During that time, Judith spent six years on the board of the Oncology Children's Foundation where she worked tirelessly with researchers at the University of New South Wales.

In January 2017, Kennedy was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for Services to the wine industry and to children's health.

Said Kennedy, "I retire from the management of the wine show with a great sense of pride in all we have achieved, and I relish my new role as show patron. I am also looking forward to continuing my other business interests in the wine industry without the day to day demands required for running a major show."

Kennedy's retirement from the AABW and the Boutique Wine Show coincides with the launch of wine discovery platform CELLARDOORS.CO, her brainchild. Kennedy will now focus on overseeing new technology company which promises to bring positive change to the wine industry by innovating winetourism and travel.

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