

## **For Immediate Release**

### **Virginia Winemaker Michael Shaps Honored with 2025 American Wine Society Award of Merit**

**Chantilly, VA - November 8, 2025** The American Wine Society (AWS) has named Michael Shaps the recipient of its 2025 Award of Merit, the organization's highest honor, presented during the AWS National Conference at the Westfields Marriott in Chantilly, Virginia. The American Wine Society Award of Merit recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the wine industry through winemaking, grape growing, education, marketing, or writing.

Over the past three decades, Michael Shaps has been a driving force behind the growth and rising quality of Virginia's wine industry. Widely regarded as one of the most influential figures in Virginia winemaking, Shaps has combined technical skill, innovation, and mentorship to help shape the state's modern wine identity. Shaps' own wines have earned an unprecedented 83 gold medals at the annual Virginia Governor's Cup competition, with nine appearances in the Governor's Case since 2016 and two Governor's Cup-winning wines. Beyond his personal achievements, he has shared his expertise with dozens of aspiring winemakers across the Commonwealth, many of whom now operate some of Virginia's most acclaimed wineries.

In addition to his Virginia operations, Shaps has extended his influence internationally. In 2004, he established a winery in Meursault, France, where he produces a line of Burgundies under the Maison Shaps label. In Virginia, Michael Shaps Wineworks crafts wines from a wide range of varietals for his own label and more than 20 clients. A firm believer in matching varietals to terroir, Shaps selects vineyard sites across the state to highlight Virginia's unique character. His wines have been featured in leading publications including *Saveur*, *Wine Spectator*, *Decanter*, and *Wine Advocate*.

"Michael Shaps has not only elevated the standard of Virginia wine but has also shared his knowledge generously, helping countless others succeed," said Natalie Dippenaar, Executive Director of the American Wine Society. "His influence is felt across vineyards, cellars, and tasting rooms throughout the Commonwealth."

### **About the American Wine Society**

Founded in 1967, the American Wine Society is the largest consumer-based wine organization in the United States, dedicated to promoting wine appreciation through education. With more than 6,000 members nationwide, AWS provides opportunities for wine enthusiasts, educators, and producers to connect and share their passion for wine.

#### **Media Contact:**

Natalie Dippenaar

Executive Director, American Wine Society

[executivedirector@americanwinesociety.org](mailto:executivedirector@americanwinesociety.org)