



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Eola Hills Vineyard Manager Receives Industry's Vineyard Excellence Award

Rickreall OR. – [Eola Hills Wine Cellars](#) is overjoyed to recognize longtime Vineyard Manager, Antonio Mendez-Leon, as the recipient of this year's Vineyard Excellence Award as part of the Oregon Wine Board's (OWB) Oregon Wine Industry Awards announced during the virtual 2021 Oregon Wine Symposium on February 17th.

Growing up in San Jose, Guanajuato, Mexico, Mendez-Leon worked numerous jobs in agriculture before moving to the states in 1991. He began his career with Eola Hills in March of 1996 planting trees in our Wolf Hill Vineyard in what would become Oregon's Eola-Amity Hills AVA. Over the decades, he learned to tend the vines from Tom's brother and Eola Hills Co-Founder Jim Huggins.

"For nearly 25 years, Antonio and I worked together in the vineyards of Eola Hills. I can say, without hesitation, he was not only a pleasure to work with, he elevated the performance of everyone around him," said Jim.

As Mendez-Leon broadened his skills, knowledge and stewardship of the land, Eola Hills expanded its holdings from the original 35-acre Oak Grove Vineyard to owning and managing more than 300 acres of sustainably, dry-farmed vineyard properties. When Jim retired in 2018, there was only one person Eola Hills knew would be capable of handling its vines with the care and understanding they needed while managing a 15-person crew.

"Antonio is immensely responsible for the success of our winery's vineyard operations. A gifted viticulturist, but even more importantly, a tremendous human being, and a great friend!" said Jim.

Mendez-Leon was nominated for this award by Kate Taylor, Operations and Vineyard Manager at [One Love Cellars](#) and formerly Eola Hills Wine Cellars Assistant Vineyard Manager, who called him "the prince of Pinot Noir." From one viticulturist to another, the honor of the Oregon Wine Industry's Vineyard Excellence award is well deserved.

The OWB is a semi-independent Oregon state agency managing marketing, research, and education initiatives that support and advance the Oregon wine and wine grape industry. It's annual industry awards give the highest honors to the state's industry leaders.

"We have been blessed here at Eola Hills to have had great winemakers, and the one thing they would all tell you is that great wines are made in the vineyard. And for over 25 years, they have all had the great fortune of having Antonio tending to the vines in those vineyards," said Founder Tom Huggins.



About Eola Hills Wine Cellars. Est. 1986

Eola Hills Wine Cellars has been locally owned and operated since the early 1980s. Located in the Eola-Amity Hills AVA of Oregon's esteemed Willamette Valley, we own and manage more than 325 acres of sustainable, dry-farmed vineyards. Longtime Winemaker Steve Anderson crafts palate-friendly wines that reflect the mild, maritime climate combined with our region's mineral-rich volcanic and sedimentary soils, perfectly capture the spirit and flavors of Oregon. With two tasting rooms offering the rustic cellar experience and stunningly scenic vineyard views respectively, visit us to enjoy our award-winning wines at approachable prices.

Learn more online - www.eolahillswinery.com.

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