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Bonnie Storm and Nena Talcott Receive the 2020 California Olive Oil Council Pioneer Award

Recipients join roster of distinguished innovators in California's extra virgin olive oil industry

Berkeley, Calif., March 16, 2020 - The two recipients of the California Olive Oil Council (COOC) Pioneer Award reflect well over a half century of collective support of the COOC and the California olive oil industry. Bonnie Storm and Nena Talcott are true pioneers in the olive oil industry.

Storm and Talcott, co-partners and founders of Grove 45 Extra Virgin Olive Oil, grow 300 Tuscan variety olive trees, including Frantoio, Leccino, Maurino and Pendolino, and 200 Sicilian Noccellara de Belice olive trees.

“We do everything in our groves by hand from weeding to pruning to harvesting,” says Talcott. “Our groves are located in Chiles Valley District region in the Napa Valley Appellation, which provides the perfect environment to grow olives with its warm summer days, chilly nights and an 800 to 1,300 foot elevation. Our oil is reflective of the rugged and hilly terroir of Chiles Valley.”

Their hands touch every aspect of the extra virgin olive oil lifecycle, from growing and harvesting the olives to packaging and selling the finished oil. Storm and Talcott strive to make their artisanal oil one of the best produced in California. They named their brand “Grove 45 Extra Virgin Olive Oil” after the year they were both born.

In February of 2010 for their first harvest, they bottled their oil in a unique aluminum container from France that can be recycled and reused. “Our first harvest over a two-day period in mid-November 2009 yielded a heavy crop,” said Storm. “We picked our olives early to avoid frosts that can occur that time of year in Chiles Valley. The olives were then delivered to the pressing facility and processed within hours of harvesting to maximize quality.”

“Bonnie Storm and Nena Talcott are not only pioneers in our industry but represent a handful of women from the early 1990's who courageously and unabashedly moved the entire industry forward by embracing iconic marketing coupled with a first class product,” said Patricia King, Executive Director of the California Olive Oil Council. “Early supporters of both the COOC seal certification program and the tasting panel, both women understood the need to differentiate

oneself from the pack. They not only supported the seal but made it a cornerstone of their commitment to quality and stringent standards.”

The Pioneer Award was established in 1999 to recognize those who have made a major contribution to the California olive oil industry and the COOC. “We are so thrilled and honored to be the recipients of the 2020 COOC Pioneer Award. We thank all those who have helped us along the way and we thank all who made this award and recognition of our work, and contribution to the olive oil industry possible”, added Talcott. “It is a huge honor and validation for what we accomplished. After 10 years we sold Grove 45 this year to a mother/daughter pair who will continue our legacy so to receive this award is very timely and the icing on the cake!”