

2023 Sovos ShipCompliant Wine Summit Speaker Bios

Matthew Botting

General Counsel, California Alcoholic Beverage Control

Matthew Botting was appointed to the position of ABC General Counsel in August 2008. He has 16+ years of state government legal experience. He was ABC's Chief Legal Counsel from 2000-2004 before he left for a short time to work in private practice. Matt returned to ABC in 2005 where he served as a Staff Counsel III until his appointment to General Counsel. Prior to joining ABC in 2000, Matt was a Deputy Attorney General with the California Department of Justice.

Larry Cormier

VP, General Manager, Sovos ShipCompliant

As general manager of Sovos ShipCompliant, Larry sets the strategy for the product roadmap and directs the company's customer-facing activities. With 25+ years of executive leadership in the creation of cloud computing, software-as-a-service and e-commerce platforms, Larry combines a strong customer-first focus with a deep appreciation for the power of software to simplify complex processes.

MJ Dale

Founder & CEO, Customer Vineyard

MJ is a seasoned leader with years of experience developing business strategy and driving wine industry innovation. She grew up in Sonoma, went to high school in Napa, and her first jobs were in wine from vineyard to bottling line to tasting room. After graduate school she left to explore new places and honed her management expertise via key positions including Director of Product Development for Westin Hotels & Resorts, Vice President Customer Marketing nationally for AT&T Wireless and CMO for Gateway Computers. MJ returned to California wine country to raise her family and has since partnered with many wine businesses to transform their consumer sales and marketing strategy and business operations. She founded Customer Vineyard in 2015 to help the wine industry and beverage alcohol businesses better leverage consumer data—in other words, to translate detailed customer insights into profitable action. MJ received a B.A. degree from Santa Clara University and a J.D. from UC Davis School of Law.

Susan DeMatei

President, WineGlass Marketing

Susan DeMatei has over 30 years of luxury direct marketing experience, and in the past 18, she has worked exclusively in the wine industry. In 2012 Susan started WineGlass Marketing, a full-service direct marketing agency for the alcohol space. Susan holds a B.S. in Communications from Boston University and an A.S. in Viticulture from Napa Valley College. She is a Certified Sommelier with the Court of Master Sommeliers, a Certified Specialist in Wine/Wine Education with the Society of Wine Educators and was awarded a DMA (Direct Marketing Association) award for strategic excellence. She is the marketing columnist for Grapevine Magazine, Crush Magazine (Canada) and a frequent freelance writer and speaker at conferences. Susan also is the marketing instructor at the WISE Academy, an adjunct instructor at Napa Valley Community College, and a repeat lecturer at the Institute for Enology & Viticulture at Walla Walla Community College and California Polytechnic State University.

Steve Gross

Vice President, State Relations, Wine Institute

Steve Gross has been at the Wine Institute since 1986, where his duties entail overseeing the activities of Wine Institute's six State Relations Regional Counsels and Regional Managers as they address state legislation affecting the wine industry, as well as coordinating Wine Institute's legislative and regulatory activities with staff, contract lobbyists and member wineries.

Susan M. Johnson

Partner, Stoel Rives LLP

Susan Johnson has more than two decades' experience as an alcohol beverage regulatory attorney. She assists wine, beer and spirits producers, grocers, specialty retailers, restaurant and hotel chain owners and operators and other companies by providing guidance through complex federal state and local alcohol licensing requirements; developing three-tier compliant sales, distribution, and advertising strategies; coordinating administrative violation defense; advising on regulatory reporting requirements related to changes in corporate ownership and governance; evaluating innovative alcohol products and distribution models; drafting proposed legislation and rule amendments to accommodate emergent alcohol industry business models; and collaborating with state and federal alcohol regulators to overcome regulatory challenges for wineries, breweries and distilleries. [1]
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Suhani Kamdar

Associate, RJO

Ms. Kamdar is a member of RJO's Retail Industry Trade Regulation, Complex Commercial Litigation and Government Contracts Practice Groups. She advises clients on compliance with state and federal laws impacting their business operations, with an emphasis on counseling retail clients on alcohol, tobacco and FDA regulations pertaining to the sale, distribution, marketing, labeling and transportation of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products and dietary supplements. Ms. Kamdar has extensively participated in all aspects of trial preparation and alternative dispute resolution. As part of RJO's commitment to providing legal services to pro bono, Ms. Kamdar has represented underserved individuals in state actions on a pro bono basis. Ms. Kamdar is active in several community, volunteer organizations and has served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for children. She is a member of the American Bar Association and San Francisco Bar Association.

Mari Kirrane

Wine Trade & Technical Advisor, Alcohol & Tobacco Tax & Trade Bureau (TTB)

A native Californian, Mari Kirrane is TTB's Wine Trade & Technical Advisor, in Headquarters Operations, International Trade Division. After graduating from college with a BS in Chemistry, she worked in the California wine industry for 10 years. Mari joined ATF in 1992 and in 2003, with the formation of TTB, she was appointed to her current role working with both the wine industry and foreign and domestic governments regarding technical winemaking issues and international wine trade issues. Mari is also part of the United States delegation to the Codex Committee meetings on Food Additives and Food Labeling.

Arun Kurichety

COO & General Counsel, Petalfast

Arun is a seasoned leader, corporate executive and attorney who possesses more than 15 years of corporate transactional/restructuring experience with a focus on the cannabis/CBD industry. As a cannabis industry “veteran,” he has advised numerous cannabis companies, from start-ups to publicly traded companies, in an ever-shifting regulatory landscape. He is highly regarded for his capital markets and debt restructuring knowledge while regularly advising on corporate governance and compliance/regulatory matters. Arun has been intimately involved in the creation of the legal, regulated cannabis market in California and throughout the country. He is an invited member of the National Cannabis Industry Association’s policy council, which shapes nationwide cannabis policy through education and lobbying. He is a regular speaker on cannabis industry panels and has been profiled by several publications for his insights on the industry. Kurichety graduated with a B.A. in government at Harvard university and J.D. of Law at Washington University School of Law.

Ryan Mercurio

Commission Counsel, Tennessee Alcoholic Beverage Commission

Ryan Mercurio has served as counsel to the Tennessee Alcoholic Beverage Commission since 2019. He is an effective advisor and communicator who understands both the regulatory needs of government and the competitive demands of business. Equally comfortable in front of chefs and restaurateurs as he is talking with legislators, Ryan is a sommelier and winemaker with over 15 years of experience in the industry. He lives in Nashville and is a native of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Lexie O’Neill

Director, Product Management, Sovos ShipCompliant

Lexie O'Neill serves as the Director of Product Management for Sovos ShipCompliant. She started her career with Sovos in 2015 on the Support team, where she learned the ShipCompliant product and got to know our customers. Today, she leads the strategy and vision for our new, modern product experience. She enjoys skiing, camping, and spending time outdoors in beautiful Colorado.

Maria Pearman

Advisory Principal, GHJ

Maria Pearman, CPA, CGMA, has more than 15 years of public accounting experience providing accounting and advisory services to clients. She is an expert in the beverage alcohol industry and specializes in internal accounting processes, financial reviews, budgeting, cash flow forecasting, financial strategy and succession planning. Prior to joining GHJ, Maria built a national practice focused on helping beverage alcohol clients to improve financial results and maximize efficiency of operations and guided them through ownership transitions. Published by the Brewers Association in 2019, Maria wrote *Small Brewery Finance* and in 2022 she wrote a second book, *Distillery Finance*, published by the American Distillers Institute. Maria is also a featured speaker and author on topics in the beverage space and has taught courses at the Business of Craft Beer program at the University of Vermont, Portland State University, and the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States Academy.