



## WILLOWS LODGE WINE DIRECTOR CARA DELAVALLADE ACHIEVES ADVANCED SOMMELIER CERTIFICATION



PHOTO: Cara DeLavallade, wine director, photographed in front of the wine cellar at Barking Frog

Woodinville, WA (September 29, 2015) – [Willows Lodge](#), a favorite Northwest retreat in the heart of Woodinville Wine Country and the home of the award-winning Barking Frog restaurant, announces its Wine Director **Cara DeLavallade** has successfully achieved the next level in wine education, **Advanced Sommelier**. Cara passed the three-day, Advanced Sommelier Exam by the [Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas](#) and thereby adding her name to an elite list. Of particular note, **only eight out of 61** people in Cara's group who took the test in Philadelphia on September 8-10, 2015 passed. Cara did so on her first seating, while it has taken many others three or four attempts.

The Advanced Sommelier exam, is the third in a series of four increasingly challenging tests of knowledge and skill offered by the Court. By the time candidates reach the Advanced Examination, most have already invested years of study, in addition to significant time working in and around the beverage industry. In Cara's case, she took the Advanced Course in February 2014 and has essentially been studying for a total of two years prior to taking the exam. At this level, candidates have a superior understanding of wine theory and beverage service, as well as a highly sophisticated tasting ability. Every year, thousands of wine service professionals attempt the Court's exams, however, only the distinguished manage to pass.

“Cara’s raw talent, dedication and enthusiasm for the wine industry is an inspiration to all of us here at Willows,” said Denny Fitzpatrick, Managing Director, Willows Lodge. “We could not be prouder of her achievement and passion that she brings to our team at the Barking Frog and the love of wine that she shares with our guests.”

In addition to this esteemed certification, Cara holds a French Wine Scholar certification and an Advanced Certification through the Wine and Spirits Education Trust. She has mastered her skills over the years from her experience abroad: from working in Mendoza, Argentina as a Sommelier at Azafran Restaurante and a Sommelier on board Silversea Cruises, to her volunteer work in the Willamette Valley at the International Pinot Noir Celebration, the Salud Charity Auction and at the Women Stars of Food and Wine event in Seattle.

The Court of Master Sommeliers was established in England in 1977 to encourage improved standards of beverage knowledge and service in hotels and restaurants. The first Master Sommelier Diploma Exam to be held in the United States was in 1987. The title Master Sommelier marks the highest recognition of wine and spirits knowledge, beverage service abilities, and professionalism in the hospitality trade. Education was then, and remains today, the Court’s charter. There are four stages involved in attaining the top qualifications of Master Sommelier: 1) Introductory Sommelier Course; 2) Certified Sommelier Exam; 3) Advanced Sommelier Course; and 4) Master Sommelier Diploma. There are 135 professionals who have earned the title of Master Sommelier as part of the Americas chapter since the organization’s inception. Of those, 116 are men and 19 are women. There are 214 professionals worldwide who have received the title of Master Sommelier since the first Master Sommelier Diploma Exam. For more information, please visit [www.mastersommeliers.org](http://www.mastersommeliers.org).

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#### **About Willows Lodge**

Willows Lodge, a Northwest style lodge located in Woodinville Wine Country just outside of Seattle, features 84 luxury guestrooms, a full-service spa and high-tech equipped meeting space. Executive Chef Bobby Moore’s American regional cuisine at Barking Frog reflects the seasonal and organic produce found in Puget Sound, and is artfully paired with an extensive list of Washington wines. Willows Lodge also boasts Fireside Cellars, offering a casual and sophisticated atmosphere tucked away in the lobby with an outdoor patio overlooking the expansive surrounding landscape. [www.willowslodge.com](http://www.willowslodge.com)

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