

Finger Lakes winemaker a semifinalist in the James Beard awards

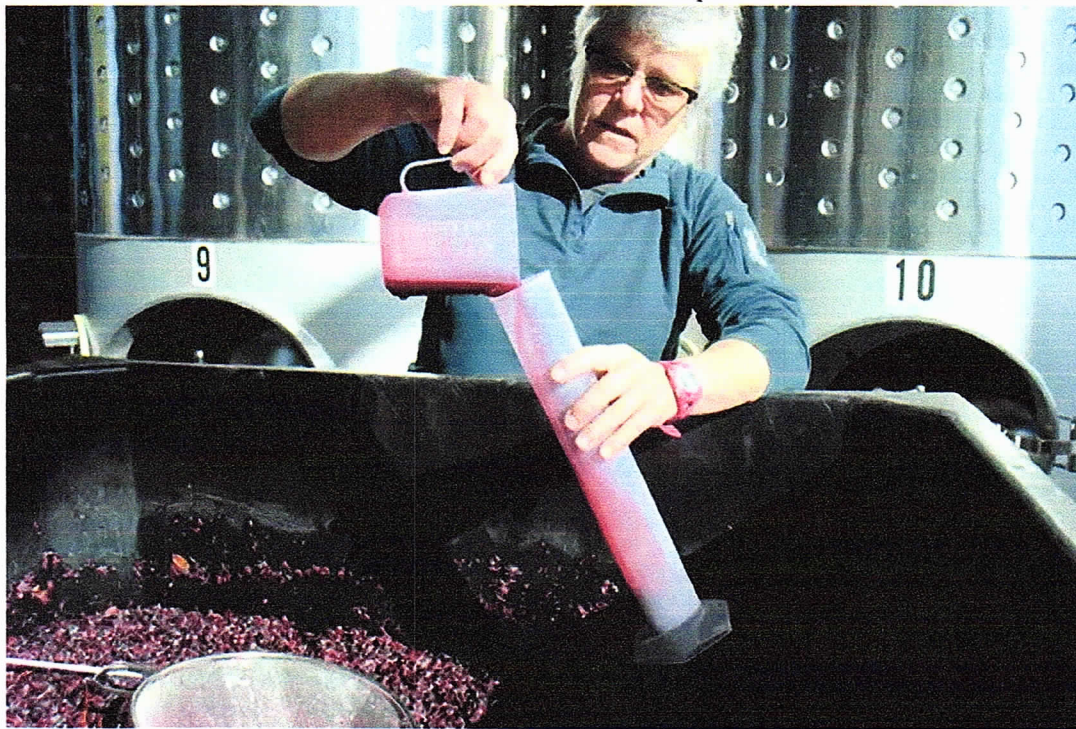
Tracy Schuhmacher, Rochester Democrat and Chronicle Published 11:48 a.m. ET Feb. 27, 2019

Nancy Irelan, co-owner and winemaker for [Red Tail Ridge \(https://www.redtailridgewinery.com/\)](https://www.redtailridgewinery.com/) winery in Penn Yan, has won the [James Beard Award \(https://www.jamesbeard.org/awards\)](https://www.jamesbeard.org/awards) in the category of Outstanding Wine, Spirits or Beer Producer.

"I'm blown away by the nomination," said Irelan reached via email, as she is traveling outside of the country. "I am incredibly proud to be able to represent the Finger Lakes wine community and the list of such inspirational and hard working folks, and I am proud to be able to represent the Finger Lakes wine community."

A 52-acre vineyard and winery on the western shore of Seneca Lake in Penn Yan, Red Tail Ridge is owned by Irelan and her husband, John Schnelle, who is the winery's viticulturist. The winery grows Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Riesling grapes, as well as more varieties well known in cooler regions of Europe.

Red Tail Ridge is also noted for its "green" efforts, such as its building, which uses geothermal energy for heating, cooling and hot water at 846 State Route 14 in Penn Yan.



Nancy Irelan is co-owner and winemaker of Red Tail Ridge Winery on Seneca Lake. (Photo: Provided by Red Tail Ridge)

No chefs from Rochester or the Finger Lakes areas were among the 2019 James Beard Award semifinalists; the closes from Las Puertas (<http://laspuertas-buffalo.com/>) in Buffalo.

Established in 1990, the James Beard Awards recognize culinary professionals for excellence and achievement in their announced by the James Beard Foundation on March 27. The 2019 James Beard Awards Gala will take place on Mond Chicago.