



**Maureen E. Downey, DWS, CWE, FWS**

**Fine Wine & Spirits Expert**

**Contact: 415-729-9699**

**maureen@chaiconsulting.com**

**Owner, Founder and Managing Partner of Chai Consulting LLC & WineFraud.com**

**CEO, Chai Vault, Inc.**

Independent, globally recognized wine and spirits expert and published author specializing in appraisals, valuation, authentication, collection creation and curation as well as liquidation, including consignment oversight, of fine and rare wine and spirits. The foremost authority on counterfeit wine and wine fraud in the world. Expert witness experience involving counterfeit bottles, loss due to fire, hurricane and electrical outage, divorce and estate needs and insurance claims.

## **Experience**

**Owner/Founder, Managing Partner, Chai Consulting LLC & WineFraud.com, San Francisco (2005-Present)**

Directs an international team managing private wine and spirits collections, advising vendors in risk mitigation and best practices, creating and managing restaurant wine programs, training teams and individuals in wine and spirits authentication. Provides expert witness services to private individuals, wineries, and insurance companies involving appraisals, valuations for estate needs, asset division (divorce), loss due to fire, hurricane, floods and electrical outages and pre-sale estimates. Inventory analysis, liquidation, and consignment oversight to assure highest prices achieved. Collection building, planning, inventory taking, organizing, inputting into online inventory management systems and ongoing management and advisory programs.

Wine and spirits bottle authentication services all over the world with Chai Vault certification – blockchain secured proof of authenticity and provenance or reporting to assist swift renumeration of bad purchases.

Owns Winefraud.com, the first of its kind online resource assisting individuals and trade professionals to combat wine and spirits fraud including avoiding the purchase or sale of counterfeit bottles.

Advises the world's top collectors, auction houses, wine merchants, restaurants, and hotels, as well as the FBI and US Department of Justice (DOJ). Notable cases include wine fraud cases USA v. Kurniawan, Koch v. Greenberg, Gundlach v. Soutirage, and the fire damage case JJ's v. Time Warner Cable.

**Senior Specialist, Fine & Rare Wine Department, Bonhams, San Francisco (2003-2005)**

**Senior Specialist, Zachys Wine Auctions, New York (2002-2003)**

First employee in this new company. Responsible for creating the architecture of and establishing systems, procedures, and standards for valuation, inspection, assessment, authentication, lotting, sale order, catalogue content as well as consignment management and buyer consultation and communications.

**Senior Specialist, Morrell & Company Fine and Rare Wine Auctions, New York (2000-2002)**

**Restaurant Manager, Lespinasse, New York (1996-1998)**

Manager of the number one four-star restaurant and the highest rated Zagat restaurant in the country. Responsible for revamping the reservation system enabling efficient turn such that the restaurant was profitable 3 quarters in a row, while increasing service ratings in *NYT*, *Zagat* and *Conde Nast Traveler*.

**Service Director, Felidia, New York (1997-1999)**

**Crystal Room Manager, Tavern on the Green, New York (1996)**

**Manager Glitretind Restaurant, Stein Eriksen Lodge, Deer Valley, Utah (1994-1996)**

**Stagiere, Hilton International, Food & Beverage Department, Brussels, Belgium (Summer 1993)**

**Stagiere, Hotel Copthorne Stephanie, Food & Beverage Department, Brussels, Belgium (Jan–June 1992)**



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## **Education**

International Society of Appraisers, *ongoing, need to complete the final exam*

French Wine Scholar & Instructor, Wine Scholar Guild, 2012

Spanish Wine Scholar & Instructor, Spanish Wine Society, 2008

Bordeaux Wine Tutor, Sopexa, 2009

Certified Wine Educator, Society of Wine Educators, 2008

Diploma Wines & Spirits, Wines & Spirits Education Trust, London, 2008

Sommelier Certification, Court of Master Sommeliers via the Seagram's Hospitality Program, Napa, 1995

BS Hospitality Management, Boston University, Boston, 1994

## **Professional Affiliations and Appointments**

Senior Judge, International Wine Competition, London

Judge, Texusom International Wine Competition & LA International Wine Competition

Judge, San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition

Columnist for Wine-Searcher.com

Top 50 Most Powerful Women in Wine - Drinks Business, December 2012

## **Professional Certifications**

Diploma in Wines & Spirits from the Wine & Spirit Education Trust in London

Certified Wine Educator - Distinction of Merit for achieving second highest score globally that year

French Wine Scholar and Instructor

Certified Spanish Wine Educator

International Bordeaux Tutor

California Wine Specialist

Certified Sommelier



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**Expert Witness/Depositions/Trial Experience/Reports for Court:**

Over 50 court ready reports have been submitted to clients for authentication remuneration.

Successful settlements have been achieved by clients as a result of The Chai Method Authentic Reports without going to trial in a number of cases including at times multiple settlements from: Acker Merrill & Condit, Christie's, Park Avenue Liquors, The Wine Connection (NY), Premier Cru, and a considerable number of other vendors.

Numerous reports have been submitted for use in insurance claims, divorces and estate matters.

**Sample of reports and testimony submitted:**

Shartsis Friese LLP : Expert Report, *Napa Winery*, total loss due to 2020 Glass Fire in Napa

Precision Rick Management: Expert Report, wine loss at *San Diego restaurant* from 2019 PG&E outage

State Farm Insurance: Expert Reports, wine loss at several homes due to the 2018 Woolsey Fire

GAIG: Expert Report, *Napa Winery*, multi million dollar loss due to 2017 Wine Country Fires

*Client vs Soutirage*: Expert Report, counterfeit wine

JJ's Restaurant: Expert Report, Deposition and trial testimony, restaurant wine loss due to devastating gas explosion and fire which occurred in 2013.

Department of Justice: Expert Reporting in sentencing phase of US vs Rudy Kurniawan

Victim losses due to actions of convicted counterfeiter, Rudy Kurniawan.

Two expert reports totalling \$19.5 million of the \$28 mill in restitution assigned to Rudy Kurian to pay back to his victims.

Mr Ben Frokka vs Charlie Trotter's: Expert Report, counterfeit wine

Lera vs Antique Wine Company: Expert Report, counterfeit wine

Koch vs Greenberg, deposed September 2, 2010 and testified in trial, March 2013 in New York City.

Greenberg found by the jury to have committed fraud by knowingly selling counterfeit bottles and assigned to pay \$20million in damages to Bill Koch.

Miamian vs Wine Gavel, deposed, June 2012. Fraudulent activity by Wine Gavel owner, resulting in the prosecution of owner, CEO, Joshua Krummenhole.



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**Select Print Media**

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## **2020-2022**

February 27, 2022 | [The Guardian, UK](#) Wine Crime is Soaring but a New Generation of Tech Savvy Detectives is on the Case

February 4, 2022 | [Wine Industry Advisor](#) Counterfeit Wine Investigations

February 3, 2022 | [Sommelier Business](#) Wine Fraud How to Identify and Tackle Counterfeit Wine Issues

February 15, 2021 | [Seventy Fifty Daily](#) Beyond High-Profile Scandals, Wine Fraud Is Rampant

November 4, 2020 | [Wine-Searcher](#) King of Wine Fraud Facing Freedom

## **2019**

July 19, 2019 | [Financial Times](#) The Perils of Storing Fine Wine, Jancis Robinson

Feb 25, 2019 | [Forbes](#) Growth in the Wine Auction Market is Driven by Asian Consumers

Jan 17, 2019 | [Wall Street Journal](#) Is That Wine You've Been Hoarding Actually Valuable?

## **2018**

Sept 18, 2018 | [Town & Country](#) Wine Counterfeiting and the Chai Vault

April 6, 2018 | [Wall Street Journal](#) What It Takes to Out-Sleuth Wine Fraud

Mar 6, 2018 | [Wine-Searcher](#) Damaged wines after disasters hit the marketplace

Feb 15, 2018 | [Wine Enthusiast](#) How to spot fake wines

## **2017**

Jan 22, 2017 | [Forbes Asia](#) How to avoid buying fake wine and our Trainings in Hong Kong

Mar 2, 2017 | [South China Morning Post](#) Hong Kong Trainings and counterfeit wines in Hong Kong

Mar 10, 2017 | [World of Fine Wine](#) Fighting Fraud: Knowledge is Power

June 28, 2017 | [BBC](#) The Wine Detectives

## **2016**

Dec 7, 2016 | [Drinks Business](#) How much counterfeit wine is in the world, and where it is sold

May 30, 2016 | [Good Food Revolution](#) Sour Grapes: To Catch a Wine Con

January 3, 2016 | [Newsweek](#) How to Commit the Perfect Wine Crime: Steal a Case. Or Make Your Own

## **2015**

Nov 30, 2015 | [The Wine Write](#) Maureen Downey: Wine Fraud Expert (& More)

Nov 13, 2015 | [CNN](#) Wine fraud eroding value of liquid assets

May 21, 2015 | [Bloomberg Business](#) How To Know if your Expensive Wine is Fake

February 11, 2015 | [Bloomberg News](#) New Wine Fraud Website Will Help You Avoid Fake Bottles

## **2014 & Earlier**

December 8, 2014 | [Robb Report](#) Expert Eye

August 8, 2014 | [Decanter Magazine](#) Wine Fraudster Rudy Kurniawan Sentenced to 10 Years in Prison

July 4, 2014 | [Financial Times](#) A nose for crime: counterfeit wines

April 17, 2014 | [Decanter](#) The Decanter interview: Maureen Downey

December 15, 2013 | [Vanity Fair France](#) Les acheteurs ont perdu confiance dans les vieilles bouteilles

Fall 2013 | [Bostonia](#) COVER Cons & Connoisseur

July 18, 2009 | [Jancis Robinson](#) Burgundy's Sherlock Holmes



## Select Interviews

### Television & Cinema

March 24, 2021 - "The Con." *ABC News*. ABC, New York. Television.

November 2019 - Formosa TV Broadcast, Taipei, Taiwan. Television.

August 4, 2017 - "Could the Wine you Buy be Part of a Fraud Scheme?" *American Greed*. CNBC, NJ. Television.

2016 - Rothwell & Atlas, *Sour Grapes*, Dogwoof Films, London

June 13, 2014 - "What's Really Being Poured Into Your Wine Glass?" and "What Makes a Billionaire Cry? Bill Koch Duped by Wine Fakes" *20/20*. ABC News, New York, NY. Television.

December 22, 2013 - "Counterfeit wine: A vintage crime" *CBS Sunday Morning*. CBS, New York, NY. Television.

November 9, 2012 - "Counterfeit Wine" *Inside Edition*. CBS, New York, NY. Television.

### Podcasts & Video Interviews

#### 2022 **Melanie Young, The Connected Table Podcast**

*Ep. 209 Melanie Young interviews Maureen Downey, Women in Wine*

2022 **Hayley Crane, ABC Breakfast Radio Show Melbourne AU, Live** *interviews Maureen Downey*

#### 2021 **Marty Waldin, Italian Wine Podcast, Wine2Wine 2021**

*Ep. 268 Maureen Downey (Chai Consulting) on Combating Wine Fraud*

#### 2021 **Chris Scott, Wine2wine, Clubhouse Marathon**

*Ep 702 Chris Scott interviews Maureen Downey*

2021 **Karen MacNeil, Winespeed.com** *interviews Maureen Downey*

#### 2021 **Robert Vernick, Peter Yeung, XChateau Wine Podcast**

*13 January 2021 Chasing Counterfeits with Maureen Downey, Chai Consulting*

#### 2019 **Lawrence Francis, Interpreting Wine Podcast**

*Ep 343 - Maureen Downey, Chai Consulting, Wine2Wine 2019*

*\*2019 Best Interview Award from Born Digital Wine Awards\**

#### 2019 **Monty Waldin, The Italian Wine Podcast**

*Ep 268 Maureen Downey (Chai Consulting) on Combating Wine Fraud & Counterfeiting*

#### 2019 **Natalie MacLean, Unreserved Wine Talk Podcast**

*Ep 29 - Wine Scandals, Fakes and Forgery with Maureen Downey*

#### 2018 **Ilias Mastrogiannis, Distillery Nation Podcast**

*Ep 34 - The Investigator*

#### 2018 **BBC World Service Podcast**

*7 February 2018 Cracking a \$30m Case of Wine Fraud*



## Select Conference Presentation & Lectures

- 2021 October- **Wine2Wine**, Verona, Italy, "Combatting Wine Fraud, The Update"
- 2021 August - **National Convention of State Liquor Administration**, Reno, NV,  
"Flipped and Faked, The Rise of Fraud in Secondary Markets "
- 2021 July - **WineWomen.net Annual Fundraiser** , Napa, CA , " Combating Wine Fraud"
- 2021 February - **AIDV Canadian Annual Wine Law Conference**. "Counterfeiting and Fraud in Wine"
- 2020 December - **University of Burgundy Wine & Spirits MBA Program Students, Dijon, France**.  
"Winefraud, Problems & Solutions"
- 2020 July - **University of Externado Columbia, School of Hospitality Students**
- 2019 November - **Simei Symposium**, Milan, Italy. "Wine Fraud Threats to the Wine Market"
- 2019 November - **Wine2Wine**, Verona, Italy. "Wine Fraud Threats to the Wine Market"
- 2019 October - **Simple Congress**, Moscow, Russia. "Wine Fraud Threats to the Wine Market"
- 2019 August - **Texsom**, Dallas, TX. "Valuation, Sourcing, & Vetting of Secondary Market Bottles"
- 2019 June - **ACFE Summer Splash**, San Jose, CA. "The Ugly Underbelly of Fine Wine & Spirits"
- 2018 & 2019 - **Blockchain Expo**, Santa Clara, CA. "Protecting Luxury Goods using Blockchain Technology"
- 2018 July - **Must Fermenting Ideas**, Cascais, Portugal. "Wine Fraud & Counterfeiting: Should we be Afraid?"
- 2018 June - **Institute of Masters of Wine Symposium**, Rioja, Spain. "Wine Fraud and Counterfeiting"
- 2017 - **International Fraud Awareness Week**, Columbus, OH. "Wine Fraud and Counterfeiting"  
Ohio State Attorney General hosted continuing education conference for national law enforcement
- 2017 - **ACFE- Association of Certified Fraud Examiners**, SF, CA. "Fighting Wine Fraud & Counterfeiting"
- 2015 - **TexSom**, Dallas, TX. "Wine Fraud Prevention in Restaurants"
- 2014 - **New Yorker Festival**, New York, NY. "Fake Wine"
- 2013 - **Hong Kong Trade Development Conference**, Hong Kong, China.  
"Counterfeits & Fakes: Issues Facing Asian Markets & What Can Be Done About It"
- 2013 - **WineVision**, London, UK. "Navigating the Wild West of the Wine World: China Speculation & Fraud"
- 2012 & 2014 - **Wines & Vines Packaging Conference**, Napa, CA. "Protecting your Brand"
- 2012 & 2013 - **Society of Wine Educators Conference**, San Mateo, CA. "What Makes a Vintage"
- 2010 - **CA Probate Officers Conference**, Pismo Beach, CA. "Wine Cellars & Bottled Wine Valuation"

## Other Presentation & Lectures

- 2019 November - **The London Women & Wine Club**, London, UK. "Combatting Wine Fraud"
- 2016 - **Medical Friends of Wine**, San Francisco, CA. "Wine Appreciation and Collecting"
- 2016 – **Exploratorium**, San Francisco, CA. "Fine Wine Facts and Frights"
- 2015 - **Peninsula Volunteers Annual Fundraiser**, Menlo Park, CA "The Intriguing World of Rare Wine"
- 2014 - **Bellagio Hotel**, Las Vegas, NV. "Wine Fraud: Issues, Factors, Fraudsters & Contributors, Counterfeit Wine"  
Educational Seminar for hotel wine directors and sommeliers.
- 2013 - **Napa Valley Vintners**, Napa Valley, CA. "Protecting your brand from Counterfeit and Fraud"
- 2014 – **PURE**, Isabelle Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA. "Managing your Personal Wine Collection"
- 2014 - **8-Ball Association**, Millbrae, CA. "Wine Counterfeiting & Fraud"
- 2012 - **Boston University, School of Hospitality, Dean's Distinguished Lecturer Series**, Boston, MA.  
"The Wine Industry: A Huge Global Market with Huge Job Opportunities."



## Select Articles Published by Maureen Downey

### [An Experts Guide to Wine Investment](#)

<http://www.wine-searcher.com/m/2016/11/an-expert-s-guide-to-wine-investment>

Nov 6, 2016...Wine investment and authentication expert **Maureen Downey** offers tips on investing in wine.

### [Location, Location: Auction Trends Part 2 | Wine News & Features](#)

[www.wine-searcher.com/m/2013/09/wine-auction-trends-part-2](http://www.wine-searcher.com/m/2013/09/wine-auction-trends-part-2)

Sep 5, 2013 ... Location, Location: Auction Trends Part 2. ... marking the start of the fall auction season.

### [Fine Wine Auction Trends: Part 1 | Wine News & Features](#)

[www.wine-searcher.com/m/2013/09/trends-in-wine-auctions-part-1](http://www.wine-searcher.com/m/2013/09/trends-in-wine-auctions-part-1)

Sep 4, 2013 ... Fine Wine Auction Trends: Part 1. In the first of a two-part series to mark the start of the fall auction season, **Maureen Downey** assesses the...

### [Cracking the Case On Counterfeit Wines | Wine News & Features](#)

[www.wine-searcher.com/m/.../cracking-the-code-of-counterfeit-wine](http://www.wine-searcher.com/m/.../cracking-the-code-of-counterfeit-wine)

Aug 15, 2013 ... The recipe was revealed by wine counterfeiting expert **Maureen Downey**, who is training the FBI to chase wine fraudsters.

### [Wine Fraud: In Defense of Auction Houses | Wine News & Features](#)

[www.wine-searcher.com/.../wine-fraud-in-defense-of-auction-houses](http://www.wine-searcher.com/.../wine-fraud-in-defense-of-auction-houses)

Aug 9, 2012 ... Wine Fraud: In Defense of Auction Houses. An examination of fraud in the fine- wine industry.

### [The American Wine Scene in Pictures | Wine News & Features](#)

[www.wine-searcher.com/m/.../the-american-wine-scene-in-pictures](http://www.wine-searcher.com/m/.../the-american-wine-scene-in-pictures)

Jul 4, 2013 ... In the first of a two-part series to mark the start of the fall auction season, Maureen Downey assesses the market. By **Maureen Downey**

### [A Guide to Refining Your Wine Collection](#)

<https://www.wine-searcher.com/m/2013/01/a-guide-to-selling-your-fine-wine-collection>

Thursday, 24-Jan-2013 *Make 2013* the year to get your cellar in order **Maureen Downey** compares different avenues for selling fine wines.

### [Old and Rare Wines For the Masses | Wine News & Features](#)

[www.wine-searcher.com/.../wine-counterfeiting-kurniawan-maureen-downey](http://www.wine-searcher.com/.../wine-counterfeiting-kurniawan-maureen-downey)

Jun 22, 2012 ... Old & Rare Wines For the Masses. ... **M Downey** investigates hoodwinking via the case of the ...

### [Grand Jury Indicts the Man Known As "Dr Conti"](#)

[www.wine-searcher.com/m/2012/05/grand-jury-indicts-kurniawan](http://www.wine-searcher.com/m/2012/05/grand-jury-indicts-kurniawan)

May 10, 2012 ... **Maureen Downey** is feeling vindicated. For more than a decade, the 39-year-old Californian – an expert in wine appraisal – has insisted that...

### [Our Top Stories of 2012 | Wine News & Features | Wine-Searcher](#)

[www.wine-searcher.com/m/2012/12/our-top-stories-of-2012](http://www.wine-searcher.com/m/2012/12/our-top-stories-of-2012)

Dec 25, 2012 ... Caution is Best When It Comes to Old Wines: **Maureen Downey's** guide to staying away from counterfeit wines.

### [Safe Storage For Fine Wines | Wine News & Features](#)

[www.wine-searcher.com/m/2012/.../the-art-of-delaying-gratification](http://www.wine-searcher.com/m/2012/.../the-art-of-delaying-gratification)

Sep 12, 2012 ... **Maureen Downey** has cautionary tales from the cellar. ... is a foremost expert