

# The Press Democrat

**Sebastopol winemaker Akiko Freeman honored with Game Changer Award**

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Akiko Freeman of Freeman Winery in Sebastopol. (Sonoma County Tourism)

Akiko Freeman, winemaker and co-founder of [Freeman Winery in Sebastopol](#), will receive the Game Changer Award from [the Asia Society of Northern California](#) on April 23 in San Francisco.

The Asia Society is a nonprofit that promotes collaboration between the U.S. and Asia in business, arts, culture, education, and policy. The Game Changer Award honors those who have shown strong leadership in these fields and inspired others.



Akiko Freeman, winemaker with Freeman Vineyards and Winery, Friday, Dec. 15, 2023 near Sebastopol. (Kent Porter / The Press Democrat) 2023

Freeman founded Freeman Vineyard and Winery with her husband, Ken, in 2001. She became the first woman to receive the Green-White Achievement Award for agricultural excellence from the Agricultural Society of Japan.

Freeman's wines were served at a White House dinner in 2015 when President Barack Obama hosted then-Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan. They were also featured at [a 2024 luncheon](#) hosted by former Vice President Kamala Harris for then-Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

Other 2026 Game Changer Award recipients include Emmy and Golden Globe-winning producer Janet Yang and Arthur Sze, the 25th Poet Laureate of the United States.