

For Immediate Release



15th Annual Sonoma Valley Harvest Wine Auction Weekend Raises Record \$1.3 Million for Local Charities

Record Crowds, New Venue and Benziger Winery's 2007 Toyota Prius Hybrid Lot Highlight Annual Fundraiser

Sonoma, Ca (September 4, 2007) As the final gavel fell at the 15th Annual Sonoma Valley Harvest Wine Auction, three, sun soaked days of wine, food and fun culminated in a record breaking \$1.3 million dollars raised for local charities. Sunday's live auction, presided over by honorary chairs Richard and Alis Arrowood and hosted for the first time on the grounds of Cline Cellars, capped off a weekend of fundraising events that also included Palate, a chef and vintner hosted culinary extravaganza hosted at the Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn and Spa; Taste of Sonoma Valley, a public food and wine tasting at Depot Park and a series of private, winery hosted winemaker dinners.

"We're thrilled with the results of this year's auction weekend" said Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Foundation (SVVGF) Executive Director Grant Raeside, "Given the increasing number of events and fundraisers competing for resources and attention, we're humbled by the outpouring of generosity from those who attended our events as well as those – including member wineries and growers, sponsors, hospitality, community and charity partners and of course our tireless volunteers – who have made this our most successful auction ever."

Celebrating its 15th anniversary, the auction drew a record crowd of 600, an increase over last year's count of 500 that was due in part to the expanded venue space at Cline Cellars as well as the winery's proximity to San Francisco. Famously known as the wine auction that puts the *fun* in fundraising, this year's event, entitled "The Wild Bunch" featured the finest Sonoma wines and cuisine set against the backdrop of ribald, western themed performances that introduced each auction lot. The well heeled crowd, many decked out in their cowboy finest, braved the near 100 degree heat to bid on the more than 55 auction lots donated by SVVGF member vintners, growers, restaurateurs, and community and charity partners.

2007 Sonoma Valley Harvest Wine Auction Highlights

The auction got off to a roaring start with an extraordinary line up of lots including wine collections, vintner-hosted events and travel adventures. High bid honors went to the Benziger

Family who, in keeping with their commitment to Biodynamic farming and sustainable wine growing, donated a 2007 Toyota Prius Hybrid, free gas for a year and a special dinner hosted in their wine cave and prepared by Preston Dishman of The General's Daughter restaurant using biodynamically grown foods from the Benziger Estate. Appearing as "The Green Men Group", the Benziger "boys", clad in green overalls and Carmen Miranda inspired Farmer John hats challenged the crowd to "reduce their carbon footprint but not their wine drinking footprint" The combined lot raised \$72,000 in the day's most active bidding, with the winning bid for the Toyota Prius going to Trilogy Glass & Packaging of Santa Rosa.

Other auction highlights included Tommy Smothers who delighted the crowd with his famous yo-yo acumen; a raucous performance of "Save a Horse, Ride a Cowboy" by Magnum .44 Force, a dance troupe of the Valley's top women vintners offering their 44 bottle auction lot of mixed magnums; an appearance by Sonoma Valley's Dean of Winemaking, Bob Sessions in full cowgirl drag to present his Hanzell Vineyards auction lot; and a rousing "stomp" style percussion performance by the NBC11 gang for an auction lot featuring a Chinese New Year's Dinner privately hosted by Lance Lew.

The top five lots included:

Lot 25 - Benziger Family Winery – 2007 Toyota Prius /Wine Cave Dinner - \$72,000

Lot 17 - Gloria Ferrer Winery – Barcelona Wine Trip hosted by Eva Bertran - \$20,000

Lot 56 - Private Home in Italy for Week - \$19,000

Lot 13 - Trip to Buenos Aires, Mendoza Valley Argentina - \$19,000

Lot 4 - Audellsa Winery – Week stay at private Costa Rica Castle - \$17,000

For full auction results and photos visit www.sonomavalleywine.com

2007 Sonoma Valley Harvest Wine Auction Weekend Chairs, Sponsors and Beneficiaries

The 15th Annual Sonoma Valley Harvest Wine Auction was presided over by honorary co-chairs Richard and Alis Arrowood of Arrowood Vineyards and Winery. Major Sponsors include presenting sponsor Nelson Staffing, and Farella, Braun + Martel, Trilogy Glass & Packaging, ThreeHouse Multimedia, Cline Cellars, American Airlines, California Wine Tours, Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa, NBC 11-TV, The Lodge at Sonoma, San Francisco Magazine and Wine Country Party & Events. Auction proceeds benefit a number of local organizations including Vineyard Worker Services, the Sonoma Valley Education Foundation and the Mentoring Alliance

About the Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Foundation (SVVGF)

The Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Foundation (SVVGF) is a unique non-profit organization. Hundreds of vintners and growers share a mission to promote Sonoma Valley wines and grapes, support cooperation and collaboration among vintners and growers, and develop community

awareness of the industry. For more information on the SVVGF, please call 707-935-0803 or visit www.sonomavalleywine.com.

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