

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monterey Vintners Invite Wine Enthusiasts To Flashback and Unwind

Monterey County Vintners and Growers Foundation celebrates the 70s - and industry leader Rich Smith of Paraiso Vineyards and Valley Farm Management - at the 2010 Monterey Wine Auction & Gala

(Monterey, CA) March 24, 2010—Forty years ago, while Americans wore bellbottoms, beads and spoke about peace and love, only two wineries existed in Monterey County's wine country: Chalone Winery and Paul Mason Winery. This was also the era of a quiet food and wine revolution spearheaded by Julia Childs and James Beard that, in turn, altered America's lifestyle and their appreciation of food and wine. Banks had predicted an 8% annualized growth in California premium wines over the following decade and the tax shelter business of that time fueled the boom of vineyard planting. Aspiring winegrape-growers and vintners began to discover Monterey's unique *terroir* and set deep roots into its soil. Today the region boasts 85 growers and winemakers, over 175 unique vineyards in 9 distinct AVAs that are planted to 42 varietals along this 90-mile long regional AVA. In celebration of the past and present, the Monterey County Vintners and Growers Foundation (MCVGF) invites guests to don bellbottoms and beads, and get their disco shoes on, for the annual **Monterey Wine Auction and Gala** on **Saturday, May 8** from **5:00 PM to 10:00 PM** at the **Mission Ranch in Carmel**.

Not just an intimate gourmet dinner with wine industry insiders, this event also serves a uniquely humanitarian purpose with a live and silent auction to benefit a plethora of worthy causes: College scholarships for children of Monterey County agriculture employees, agriculture studies through the American Vineyard Foundation, viticulture research through the University of California Monterey Outreach Office, and other non-profit organizations throughout the community.

This event is a terrific opportunity to bid on one-of-a-kind, invaluable lifestyle and wine packages while socializing with the winery personalities that make Monterey truly unique as a viticulture region. A sampling of wineries that are scheduled to host intimate tables at the event includes DFV Wines, Estancia, Galante Vineyards, Hahn Winery, J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines, Lockwood Vineyards, Paraiso Vineyards, Pelerin Wines, Robert Talbott Vineyards, Scheid Vineyards, Silvestri Vineyards, and Wrath Wines.

Guests will enjoy wines from these producers alongside a perfectly-paired menu from Chef Don McPherson of the Mission Ranch featuring fresh Dungeness crab cakes, flank steak rolls and lobster spring rolls, as well as a main dish of grilled Angus filet and salmon with scallion potatoes and a truffle *jus* and roasted fennel sauce. The menu will be completed with chocolate espresso pots de crème for dessert.

Auctioneer Butch Lindley will entertain and delight with a live auction of 10 luxury items. Those who want to peruse the 40 silent auction items or test their luck with raffle tickets will

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be tempted by rare finds. Scheduled for Mother's Day Weekend, the Monterey Wine Auction & Gala is the perfect opportunity to treat Mom to a gourmet dinner and wine pairing, as well as an unexpected and unique gift from the auction. "This is one of the most rewarding events that the viticulture industry collaborates on each year," commented Rhonda Motil, Executive Director of the Monterey County Vintners and Growers Foundation. "Perhaps in 2010, more than any year in recent history, the need for college scholarships and community donations to serve the public good in our county is greater than ever. The viticulture industry in Monterey continues to assist in utilizing the talents that we have, and the products that we create, to give back to the community in a substantial way. We encourage those who are passionate about wine, food, and the Monterey community to attend this event and enjoy a fun evening out as they relive the laid-back 70s and support worthwhile causes that directly provide for the youth and other charitable organizations in Monterey County."

At this annual event, the MCVGF membership also recognizes a prominent Monterey County viticulture leader for his or her contributions to the industry, community, and causes that are supported by the Foundation. This year's honoree will be **Rich Smith, President of Paraiso Vineyards and Valley Farm Management**. Rich came to Monterey County in the early 1970s and saw the potential for what a great viticulture area Monterey County would become. Nearly 40 years later, his dreams are being realized as Monterey Wine Country continues to be showcased on the national and international stage as a "go-to" area for sought after grapes and wines.

Tickets to the Auction & Gala are \$150 and become available on Monday, March 22nd. Further details on the event can be found at <http://montereywines.org/events> or by calling the Monterey County Vintners and Growers Foundation at 831.375.9400. Space is limited; the Auction & Gala sells out each year, so early ticket purchase is encouraged.

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CONTACTS:



Linda Parker Sanpei
3940-7 Broad Street, #301
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.543.2288 0 805.550.9150 c
linda@parkersanpei.com
www.parkersanpei.com



Rhonda Motil
Executive Director
Monterey County Vintners & Growers Association
PO Box 1793, Monterey, CA 93942
831.375.9400
rmotil@montereywines.org
www.montereywines.org