

For Immediate Release  
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### **Santa Maria Valley Establishes Own Vintners' Association**

Santa Barbara County, CA – Santa Maria Valley, long considered one of the premiere wine growing regions along California's South Central Coast for Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and cool-climate Syrah, has formed its own vintners association. The new association includes a board of directors comprised of 7 winemakers, winegrowers and winery representatives, 2 restaurant owners/chefs and two business people from the Santa Maria business community. The new organization is named "Santa Maria Valley Wine Country" or the SMVWC. The "association" has been left off of their official name as, "Associations often connote formality. While we take our wines very seriously, we want to communicate that we are a community of folks that are warm and welcoming. We feel we can communicate that more effectively by identifying ourselves as a wine country rather than an association", says Chairman of the Board, Nicholas Miller.

The Board of Directors are as follows: Nicholas Miller (owner, Bien Nacido Vineyards, Solomon Hills Vineyards), James Ontiveros (winemaker, owner, Native 9 wines), Ed Holt (grower, manager, Rancho Sisquoc Winery), Kenneth Volk (winemaker, owner Kenneth Volk Wines), Greg Linn (winemaker, owner, Ambullneo), Chef Rick Manson (owner, Chef Rick's Restaurant), Rebecca Jacobs (owner, Wine Cottage Bistro), Gary Burk (winemaker, owner, Costa de Oro), Lori Hamill, (Hospitality and Office Manager, Foxen Vineyard) Max Tucker (General Manager Best Western and Big America) and Gina Keough (Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Bureau).

Their newly appointed Executive Director, Cynthia Stanfield, has a long history in the Santa Maria Valley, having worked and lived in this community over 30 years. Stanfield has an extensive background in the wine industry, including experience with Rideau Vineyard (Santa Ynez Valley) and Muse Management (Santa Barbara County), where she managed Events and Promotions for both companies.

"When we formed the Board of Directors, it was important to us that we include members from different aspects of Santa Maria Valley, rather than just the wine industry. We know that our industry could not flourish the way it has without the help of Santa Maria's business community, so we view them as an integral part of our success," says Stanfield.

Although the oldest commercial vineyard in Santa Barbara County is actually located in Santa Maria Valley, the vintners, winemaker and winegrowers there were not in a hurry to form their own association. "There are new appellations and new organizations forming every day. We wanted to make sure that we were organizing for all of the right reasons. We're not creating an alliance because we think our wines are deserving of more attention than others. We simply feel that our local winegrowers have a lot of character, a strong history and a compelling story. This seemed like the best way to share that story with a broader audience. We recognize that we can accomplish more as a community than as individuals." Stanfield continues.

To that end, the Santa Maria Valley Wine Country is gearing up for an exciting 2007-2008, during which they will launch their first community tastings and arrange their first cohesive events as a new group. "Our wines, especially our Pinot Noirs, are known the world over for their beauty and grace. It's one thing to have a great wine from Santa Maria Valley, but when you have 10 or more of them, side by side at one tasting, you really begin to see that there's something very special about the Santa Maria Valley. I guess most wine critics would refer to this uniqueness as "terroir". We prefer to call it the "Santa Maria Valley" way.

The SMVWC commissioned their logo from artist Loyal Newville, best known for his graphic design work that regularly appears in nationally published magazines. Newville is a graduate of the Pratt Institute of New York. When asked what inspired him to create the new logo, he responds, "When I travel the area and talk to the vineyard owners and taste their exquisite wines, I get a strong sense of pride-in their heritage of hard work and the desire to create the best wines from the land they love. I sought to capture that strength of character along with the beauty of the region when I was chosen to design the Santa Maria Valley Wine Country's logo. Of course, those amazing rolling hills dotted with live oak alongside the Pacific coastline had to be represented. The distinct natural colors were also an alluring feature I desired to capture."

To learn more about the Santa Maria Valley Wine Country or to schedule a visit with comprehensive tastings, please contact Executive Director, Cynthia Stanfield, at [Cynthia@santamariavalleywinecountry.com](mailto:Cynthia@santamariavalleywinecountry.com) or 1.866.480.5194

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