

For Immediate Release

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Amador Wine Country Strikes it Rich

Historic Sierra Foothills wine region once again mines a gold rush of awards

Plymouth, Amador County, California, July 8, 2011 . . . In what has become an annual ritual, the wineries of Amador County in California's legendary Sierra Foothills have again struck gold – medals, that is. In a region once known exclusively for its hearty, old-vine zinfandels, a new generation of vintners is crafting a diverse array of award-winning, world-class wines.

During the 2011 wine competition season, Amador wineries have garnered a huge crop of awards. For example, Jeff Runquist Winery had a field day at the California State Fair – the granddaddy of wine judgments – nabbing three Double Gold medals and being named “Golden State Winery of the Year.” Runquist won Double Gold, Best of California and Best of Class nods for its 2009 “R” Barbera and 2009 “1448” Red Table Wine. It also earned a Best of Region/Best of Class/Double Gold for its 2008 “R” Petite Sirah; a Best of Class/Double Gold for 2009 “R” Carignane; and a Gold Medal for 2008 “R” Cabernet Sauvignon. Other Amador wineries taking Double Gold medals at the State Fair included Borjon (2008 Barbera); C.G. DiArie (2008 Interlude, a blend of Zinfandel, Primitivo, Syrah and Petite Sirah); Convergence (2009 Tempranillo); Driven Cellars (2008 Petite Sirah, which also won a Best of Class nod); and Wilderotter (2008 Tempranillo).

"The judges have been extremely kind to us this year," says owner/winemaker Jeff Runquist. "The Golden Winery Award" from the California State Fair is a coveted honor and we are thrilled to have earned it. We have a long list of terrific growers we will share this with."

At the 2011 San Francisco International Wine Competition, Helwig Winery's 2009 Cooper Ranch Barbera won a Double Gold medal and was named Best Barbera of the show. A new Amador County winery, Helwig also won a Best of Class award for its 2009 Syrah and a Double Gold/Best of Class for its 2009 Petite Sirah. Also at San Francisco, Karly Winery nailed a Double Gold medal for its 2008 Buck's Ten Point Zinfandel and a Gold medal for its 2009 Garth Barbera, while Sobon Estate won Best Zinfandel and Double Gold awards for its 2008 Fiddletown Zinfandel.

Sobon's 2008 Cougar Hill Zinfandel took gold medals at six major 2011 judgments, including the San Diego International and West Coast wine competitions. The winery also earned a Double Gold medal for its 2009 Old Vines Zinfandel at the Tasters Guild International Wine Competition and a Gold medal for its Rocky Top Zinfandel at San Diego. Sobon's sister winery, Shenandoah Vineyards, won Platinum and Best Barbera awards for its 2008 ReZerve Barbera at San Diego and Best Zinfandel and Gold awards for 2008 Paul's Vineyard ReZerve Zinfandel at the 2011 Best of the Bay Zin Challenge.

"This mother lode of awards proves that Amador County wineries are now producing some of the best and most interesting wines in California, and many of the best values, as

well,” notes Jamie Lubenko, executive director of the Amador Vintners Association. “Wine lovers looking for undiscovered gems should head straight for the foothills this summer, where our small family wineries are waiting to greet them.”

<<More on Amador County>>

Amador County is among California’s oldest premium grape-growing regions, dating to the early days of the Gold Rush in the 1850s. Many of the prospectors were European immigrants whose love of wine inspired them to plant grapevines in their new home. Some of these old vines survive today and produce the intense zinfandels for which the region has long been celebrated. In recent years, Amador has also earned renown for wines made from Italian and Rhône Valley varieties. Along with the region’s fabled zinfandels, they offer wine lovers top quality and value.

Amador wineries are small, family-owned and operated operations known for their gracious hospitality. They offer visitors an intimate view of wine country often unavailable in the more heavily trafficked wine valleys of the North Coast.

Amador County Vintners: Amador Cellars, Amador Foothill, Andis Wines, Avio Vineyards and Winery, Bantam Cellars, Borjón Winery, Bray Vineyards, C.G. DiArie Vineyard and Winery, Charles Spinetta Winery, Convergence Vineyards, Cooper Vineyards, Deaver Vineyards, Dillian Wines, Dobra Zemlja, Driven Cellars, Drytown Cellars, Helwig Winery, Il Gioiello Winery/Morse Wines, Jeff Runquist, Karly, Karmere Vineyards and Winery, Nine Gables Vineyard, Nua Dair, Renwood Winery, Sera Fina Cellars, Shenandoah Vineyards, Sierra Ridge Vineyard and Winery, Sobon Estate, Story Winery, Tanis Vineyards, Terra D’Oro/Montevina Winery, Terre Rouge/Easton Wines, TKC Vineyards, Vino Noceto, Wilderotter Vineyard.