

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



## **Water, Vineyard Practices and Financing Highlight 2009 Sonoma Valley Quality Conference**

**Sonoma, CA (March 11, 2009).** The Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Alliance (SVVGA) hosted their annual Quality Conference on Tuesday, March 10th at the Lodge at Sonoma, with presentations and tastings by member growers, wineries and industry partners. Now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year, SVVGA Quality Conference provides a critical public forum to address the shared issues and trends that impact the quality of Sonoma Valley's grapes and wines.

The half-day conference kicked off with an industry review by Chris Welch of Ciatti Company, Wine & Grape Brokers followed by panel discussions on subjects ranging from boosting wine quality in the vineyard, and vineyard financing to, of course, the pressing topic of the day, water. The conference ended, as it does each year, with a varietal preview tasting, which this year featured a line up of Sonoma Valley merlots.

### **Featured topics and presenters included:**

Making Wine in the Vineyard, a panel discussion moderated by Erich Bradley, Audelssa Estate Winery and Sojourn Cellars and featuring three case studies presented by Mark Burningham, Benziger Family Winery & George MacLeod, Indian Springs Ranch; Chris Loxton, Loxton Cellars & Bruce England, EnglandCrest; Mike Sangiacomo, Sangiacomo Vineyards & Mike Cox, Schug Carneros Estate.

Vineyard Evaluation & Financing, presented by Michael Crain, Blakeslee & Crain Vineyard Advisors and Steve Herron, Exchange Bank.

Water and Light Brown Apple Moth Restrictions, a Q&A presentation of county issues by Cathy Neville, Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner; Nick Frey, Sonoma County WineGrape Commission; and Ned Hill, Parmelee-Hill Vineyards.

Merlot Tasting Panel, featuring wines presented by Art Fichtenberg of Fichtenberg Vineyards, Jeff Bundschu of Gundlach Bundschu, Mike Cox of Schug Carneros Estate and Thomas Mackey of St. Francis Vineyards & Winery.

### **About SVVGA**

The Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Alliance (SVVGA) is a non-profit trade organization serving over 500 vintners, growers and associates who share a mission to promote awareness of Sonoma Valley's grapes, wine, terroir and history as the birthplace of the California wine industry. The Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Foundation (SVVGF) is a non-profit organization that has raised over \$8,000,000 for local Sonoma Valley charities through Sonoma Valley Wine Country Weekend. To learn more about the SVVGA and SVVGF, visit [www.sonomavalleywine.com](http://www.sonomavalleywine.com) or call 707-935-0803.

### **About SVVGA Annual Events**

Each year, the Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Alliance partners with local wineries, growers, restaurants and hospitality providers to produce four signature events designed to raise awareness and appreciation for the artisan grapes, wines and food of Sonoma Valley. The events include: **Holiday in the Vines; VINOLIVO; Passport to Sonoma Valley; and Sonoma Wine Country Weekend**, featuring **the Sonoma Valley Harvest Wine Auction**. For more on these events, visit [www.sonomavalleywine.com](http://www.sonomavalleywine.com) or call 707-935-0803.

##

**Media:** Michael Coats 707-935-6203 [michael@coatspr.com](mailto:michael@coatspr.com) , Marty LaPlante 707-939-1243 [mlpspotzy@aol.com](mailto:mlpspotzy@aol.com)