



**SAVE THE DATE: 3rd Annual Sonoma Wine Country Weekend,
September 3-5, Presented by Visa Signature**

**Sonoma Valley's Storied St. Francis Winery Named Honorary Chair of
Three-Day Harvest Bacchanal**

“California’s Largest Outdoor Food and Wine Event” – *Diane Peterson, Press Democrat*

Sonoma County, CA (February 25, 2010) Mark your calendars for Sonoma’s premier [wine](#), [food](#) and social event of the year. The Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers, in partnership with the Sonoma County Vintners have announced the date and preliminary details – including the [auction](#) theme and honorary chair - for the **2010 [Sonoma Wine Country Weekend](#)**, taking place Labor Day Weekend, **September 3 – 5, 2010**. One of the country’s top [wine events](#), Sonoma Wine Country Weekend brings together hundreds of artisan growers, vintners and culinary stars in a series of events to showcase the breadth and diversity of Sonoma’s distinct wine regions. Event tickets, weekend passes and packages will go on sale to the general public beginning **June 1** at www.SonomaWineCountryWeekend.com. Presenting Sponsor Visa Signature will offer cardholders event perks and savings, including access to an exclusive ticket presale starting May 1.

Three Days. Two Hundred Wineries and Chefs. One Unforgettable Sonoma Wine Country Experience

For three days, wine, food and travel enthusiasts from all over the world converge in the birthplace of California wine for a harvest celebration that combines two of Sonoma County’s most outstanding wine events – the prestigious [Taste of Sonoma](#) at [MacMurray Ranch](#)® and the iconic [Sonoma Valley Harvest Wine Auction](#) – with a series of intimate winemaker-hosted lunches and dinners. This is a unique “insider” opportunity to celebrate the harvest season and enjoy the bounty of more than 200 acclaimed growers, vintners and chefs who comprise Sonoma’s artisan wine and food community.



Event Schedule and Venues

Winemaker Dinners and Lunches, Presented by Caliber Winepak

Friday and Saturday, September 3, 4 – Various winery venues
12:30pm - Winemaker Lunches
6:00 pm - Winemaker & Specialty “Varietal” Dinners
Lunch - \$85/person
Dinner - \$160/person, \$175 Specialty Dinners

Taste of Sonoma

Saturday, September 4 – [MacMurray Ranch](#)®, Healdsburg
11am – 4pm Taste of Sonoma
General - \$150/person
Visa Signature Cardholder General Ticket - \$95/person
Grand Reserve - \$195/person (includes Club Reserve Tent Access)

Chairman’s Dinner – Hosted by Honorary Chair St Francis Winery & Vineyards

Saturday, September 4 – St. Francis Winery & Vineyards, Santa Rosa
6:00pm
\$175/person

Sonoma Valley Harvest Wine Auction

Sunday, September 5 – Cline Cellars, Sonoma
11am – Doors Open, Silent Auction Preview
1pm -- Live Auction
General - \$500/person
Visa Signature Cardholder - \$450/person

Honorary Chair Winery: St Francis Winery & Vineyards

In recognition of their significant contribution to advancing the image of the region’s grapes and wines, St. Francis Winery & Vineyards has been selected as Honorary Chair Winery for 2010 Sonoma Wine Country Weekend. As Honorary Chair Winery, St. Francis Winery & Vineyards leadership will serve as spokespeople for the event, as well as hosts of the special “Chairman’s Dinner” on Saturday, September 4.



Christopher Silva, President and CEO of St. Francis Winery noted, “My grandfather was a dairy farmer and was born in a farm house on Sonoma Mountain in 1911, not far from the ranch where Jack London wrote of Sonoma’s ‘grapes on a score of rolling hills’. London wrote with great passion about the simple yet noble farmers and the unparalleled bounty that is Sonoma. We are pleased to serve as Honorary Chair of the 2010 Wine Country Weekend, and look forward to celebrating the wines, food, people and history that make Sonoma one of the world’s great wine growing regions.”

Taste of Sonoma: An Annual Gathering of More than 200 Acclaimed Wineries and Chefs

Wine lovers and foodies alike can immerse themselves in Sonoma’s world class food and wine culture at the 31st Annual Taste of Sonoma from 11am – 4pm on Saturday, September 4 in the vineyards of [MacMurray Ranch®](#) in Healdsburg. More than 200 award winning wineries and chefs will be on hand to showcase their talents in a gala tasting set among the vines at the historic ranch formerly owned by actor Fred MacMurray. In addition to the boundless opportunities to sip and savor the diversity of Sonoma’s rich *farm-to-table* heritage, visitors can deepen their Sonoma experience through a series of informative and entertaining wine seminars, cooking demonstrations and vineyard tours. Grand Reserve ticket holders (\$195/person versus \$150 for general admission) will enjoy special access to rare, hard-to-find and limited edition wines offered in Club Reserve. **Named one of the 10 Best Wine & Food Events in the United States by Celebrated Living Magazine**, Taste of Sonoma presents attendees with unparalleled access to Sonoma’s unmatched wines and cuisine.

Sonoma Valley Harvest Wine Auction: The Weekend’s Grand Finale and the Year’s Biggest Party

Sonoma Wine Country Weekend culminates with the 18th Annual Sonoma Valley Harvest Wine Auction, taking place Sunday September 5 on the grounds of Cline Cellars in Sonoma. Doors open at 11am with the live auction getting underway at 1pm in the [Wine Spectator](#) Auction Tent. Having raised more than \$6 million dollars for local charities since its inception, the Sonoma Valley Harvest Wine Auction is famous for its irreverent skits, lavish auction lots, and record breaking charitable donations.

Surf’s Up! This year’s auction goes **Beach Party** with the tagline “**Endless Sonoma**” as in endless wine, endless food and endless fun. Board shorts, puka shells, and flip flops will be de rigeur as Sonoma Valley’s most celebrated growers and vintners take to the stage to introduce this year’s auction lots, cowabunga-style.

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In addition to the auction's legendary display of fine wine, culinary extravagance and incomparable hospitality, ticket holders will enjoy full access to all pre and post auction festivities and lounge parties. Tables for the live auction will be hosted by, and feature the wines of, Sonoma's most prestigious growers and vintners, allowing ticket holders the opportunity to select their preferred table assignments, based upon availability.

Online Auction: Bidding is Just a Click Away

For the third year, those who can't make it to the auction in person or wish to get an early start on bidding may do so online at www.WineCountryWeekend.cMarket.com beginning August 1. This pre-auction online bidding is being made available through Bidding for Good, an on-demand, online auction platform designed solely for organizations engaged in fundraising for nonprofit causes. Visitors to the site can bid on select lots ranging in value from \$100 - \$5,000.

About 2010 Sonoma Wine Country Weekend Sponsors and Beneficiaries

A partnership between Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Foundation and Sonoma County Vintners, Sonoma Wine Country Weekend is the area's largest wine and food fundraiser, having jointly donated more than \$10 million to local charities that support students, children, farm workers and people in need. The 2010 Sonoma Wine Country Weekend is presented by Visa Signature. Visa Signature cardholders will receive exclusive perks and savings including special pricing, access to the Visa Signature Lounge, preferred seating and more throughout the event. For more information about Visa Signature, visit www.visa.com/signature.

In addition to Visa Signature, the 2010 Sonoma Wine Country Weekend is being made possible by Media Sponsors Wine Spectator and San Francisco Magazine; Executive Sponsor, MacMurray Ranch®; Winemaker Lunch and Dinner Series Title Sponsor Caliber WinePak; and Winery Sponsors, Cline Cellars and Jacuzzi Family Vineyards. For a complete list of beneficiaries and sponsors of the 2010 Sonoma Wine Country Weekend, please visit www.SonomaWineCountryWeekend.com.



About Visa Signature

Sonoma Wine Country Weekend is presented by Visa Signature. Visa Signature is a premium consumer payment card bringing cardholders a range of benefits and perks that offer special access, save time and provide everyday value. In addition to points, miles, cash back or other premium rewards offered by Visa Signature partners, Visa Signature cardholders enjoy benefits such as complimentary 24-hour concierge services and exclusive offers for fine wine and food, travel, and sports and entertainment events. For more information about Visa Signature, visit www.visa.com/signature.

About Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Alliance and Foundation

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, and history as the birthplace of the California wine industry. The Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Foundation (SVVGF) is a non-profit 501c.3 organization that has raised over \$6 million for local Sonoma Valley charities through the Sonoma Valley Harvest Wine Auction. For more information on the SVVGA and SVVGF, please call 707-935-0803 or visit www.SonomaValleyWine.com.

About Sonoma County Vintners

Sonoma County Vintners (SCV) is the leading voice of Sonoma County wine, dedicated to raising awareness of Sonoma County as one of the world's premier wine regions, noted for its heritage of artisan winemaking, distinct growing regions, and extraordinary quality. Founded in 1944, SCV represents more than 165 wineries of all sizes throughout the county. www.SonomaWine.com.

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