



3rd Annual Gingerbread Winery Contest Takes Center Stage During Sonoma Valley’s Season Long “Holiday in the Vines” Celebration

Wineries Ring In the Season With Special Events, Holiday Gift Shopping, New Release Wines, Winemaker Dinners and After-Hours Open Houses

Sonoma Ca (November 25, 2008) Sonoma Valley’s Vintner’s & Growers Alliance (SVVGA) has unveiled plans for this year’s **Holiday in the Vines**, a season long celebration of the sights, sounds and flavors of the holidays in wine country. From **Thursday, November 27th thru Sunday, January 4th** Sonoma Valley wineries will be offering revelers of all ages special seasonal events, after-hours celebrations, gift shopping and winemaker dinners. For the complete list of festivities, visit the Events Calendar at www.sonomavalleywine.com.

The **Gingerbread Winery Contest** will again be the season’s signature event. Professional and amateur chefs alike will join in the fun; producing extravagant gingerbread likenesses of Sonoma’s most acclaimed wineries. **Throughout the month of December**, visitors can pick up a map and a ballot at any of the participating wineries and cast their ballots for their favorite munchable-masterpiece. As an added bonus, each time voters cast a ballot they’ll be entered into a raffle to win a case of Sonoma Valley wines.

Last year’s Gingerbread Contest winner, **Little Vineyards Family Winery**, is partnering with the Santa Rosa Junior College Culinary School to create the ultimate gingerbread rendition of their winery. The school has selected Wendy Watson and Kathi Youngblood to oversee the project. Kathi is a current pastry student and Wendy completed the pastry program last semester. www.littlevineyards.com

Other participating wineries include:

- **BR Cohn Winery** will be enlisting students from the acclaimed California Culinary Academy to create the Gingerbread likeness of their picturesque hillside winery. www.brcohn.com

- At **Chateau St. Jean**, winery neighbor Kelly Cleaver will be constructing an elaborate rendition called "Santa's First Stop," as Chateau St. Jean is on the top of Santa's list to load up on gifts for good girls & boys! www.chateaustjean.com
- Pouring by day and baking by night, the staff at **Jacuzzi Family Vineyards** will take on the challenge and fun of capturing the likeness – including stain glass windows and courtyard - of the 18,000 square-foot Jacuzzi Family Vineyards Winery. Located in the heart of the Sonoma-Carneros region the newly built and opened winery is modeled after the original Jacuzzi family home in Udine, Italy. The winery, which is participating for the first time this year, is also home to The Olive Press, California's most highly awarded producer of extra virgin olive oil. www.jacuzziwines.com ~more~
- From the stained glass windows to the tin roof of **Kenwood Vineyards'** replicated barn, this edible creation is sure to amaze holiday visitors who come to taste the winery's award winning wines. The walls of Kenwood Winery's old barn come to life with every sugary adornment, revealing the long hours of craftsmanship by Sandy Henney, Teresa Garcia, Kathy Boyes, and Jeanine Gray in each detail. www.kenwoodvineyards.com
- The Gingerbread Winery Contest's 2006 winner, **Landmark Vineyards**, is enlisting an in-house ringer who promises to bring a "contemporary art" twist to this year's creation. Nick Benz, who directs operations at Press Club, the winery's San Francisco tasting room (located at the foot of the Four Seasons Hotel) will draw on his degree in art and his time at both the French Culinary Institute in NYC and the kitchen at Jean George's in Manhattan, to create his masterpiece. www.landmarkwine.com
- The ranch land on which **Larson Family Winery** sits has been in the family since the late 1800's. Their Gingerbread creation will mirror the winery's history as well as their "fun for the whole family" atmosphere that is summed up in the winery motto "We drink what we can, and sell the rest!" www.larsonfamilywinery.com
- The **Matanzas Creek Winery** Gingerbread House is being painstakingly created by Estate pastry chef Ryan Pollnow. It will feature both the main building and the winery's gorgeous grounds, including their famous lavender gardens. www.matanzascreek.com

- This year, **Nicholson Ranch**, is thinking really big, life-sized big, for the Gingerbread Winery competition. Tasting Room Manager and Master Gingerbread Baker, Charles Whittaker is creating a life size fireplace made with over 400 gingerbread bricks. Gingerbread stockings will be hung with care from the fireplace's chocolate covered mantel, and the Christmas tree standing next to the fireplace will be adorned with gingerbread ornaments. Gingerbread logs and fire will virtually crackle with holiday spirit as Tasting Room guests enjoy the wonders of this masterpiece!
www.nicholsonranch.com

Additional Holiday in the Vines events are being added daily. For more information visit the Events page at www.sonomavalleywine.com



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 beauty and bounty of Sonoma Valley. The events include: **Holiday in the Vines, December 1st -31st**; **VINOLIVO, February 13th**; **Passport to Sonoma Valley May 16th -17th**; and **Sonoma Wine Country Weekend and Harvest Wine Auction, September 5th -7th (Labor Day Weekend)**. For more on these events, visit www.sonomavalleywine.com or call 707-935-0803.

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 the Sonoma Valley Wine Country Weekend and Harvest Wine Auction. To learn more about the SVVGA and SVVGF, visit www.sonomavalleywine.com or call 707-935-0803.

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