



Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Alliance Offers Merchant Memberships

Sonoma Ca (February 20, 2009) The Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Alliance is proud to announce the creation of a new membership category: **Merchant Membership**. Announced by **Grant Raeside, Executive Director of the Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Alliance (SVVGA)**, at the annual State of the Alliance meeting on February third, this new category will forge a partnership between member wineries and Sonoma Valley merchants that will keep visitors in the Sonoma Valley.

“Our slogan is, “Come for the Wine, Stay for the Experience” says **Raeside**. “Merchants are a big part of the destination experience, especially during this difficult economic period, SVVGA wants to help create a strong community base of inter-referrals between wineries and merchants. We’re producing a **map highlighting our merchant and restaurant members** that will be handed out on a complimentary basis to visitors at all our wineries.”

“The top questions asked in all tasting rooms are – “Where should I eat? Where should I shop? – now for the first time we are creating a program that will support our wineries as they refer guests to local restaurants and shops and vice versa” says **Raeside**. “Merchants and restaurants will have the ability to use the **SVVGA Winery Map** to send guests to wineries.”

With the map and a variety of other marketing programs we hope to convince visitors to stretch out their visit, stay an extra night or two, and enjoy dining at our fine restaurants and shopping at our unique merchants.”

The cost of becoming a Merchant Member is a \$100 gift certificate that the Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Alliance can use to create a single auction package called: “Sonoma Valley Shopping Spree.” The money raised from this auction package will help fund year-round marketing programs.

For more information on the Sonoma Valley Merchant Membership program call **Lori McGovern, Membership Coordinator**. 707-935-0803 info@sonomavalleywine.com

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 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, September 4th -6th (Labor Day Weekend)**.

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

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