



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rare and Unique Wine Lots Unveiled for the Trade-Only Sonoma County Barrel Auction

(March 20, 2017; Santa Rosa, CA) The Sonoma County Vintners today unveiled the official lineup of wines for the third annual Sonoma County Barrel Auction, taking place April 21 at the Vintners Inn in Santa Rosa, Calif. Comprised of 90 one-of-a-kind lots, the live auction will offer members of the wine trade “never before, never again” wines from Sonoma County’s top vineyards and vintners, available in the market only by resale to their customers. The full descriptions of all lots are available online at <http://www.sonomawine.com/barrelauction>.

The 2017 Sonoma County Barrel Auction lots represent the diversity of Sonoma County’s 17 distinct AVA appellations, from well-known regions such as Alexander Valley, Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma Coast, Sonoma Valley and the Russian River Valley, to Sonoma County’s newest AVAs, Fort Ross-Seaview, Fountaingrove and Moon Mountain. The auction has continued to attract new entrants, with 43 of the 115 participants in individual and collaboration lots new to the auction in 2017. A panel of seven Master Sommeliers gathered multiple times during the months of January and February to conduct blind tastings, ensuring that each featured wine is of the highest quality and varietally correct.

“We created the Sonoma County Barrel Auction three years ago to showcase the best this region has to offer, and the 2017 auction lots live up to that challenge like never before,” says Sonoma County Vintners Executive Director Jean Arnold Sessions. “Vintners throughout Sonoma County have produced an incredible lineup of wines exclusively for the Barrel Auction. We view each wine bearing the official Sonoma County Barrel Auction label as a statement to the world of the quality and potential of our region.”

Among the highlights for the 2017 Sonoma County Barrel Auction are several highly-collectable lots including an offering from **Kosta Browne, “The Shire of Freestone.”** As the producer of last year’s top-priced lot, Kosta Browne has doubled its offering from 10 to 20 cases with a blend from the Freestone Vineyard in Sonoma Coast, fermented in a range of vessels: from stainless tank to wood and concrete open tops, concrete egg and amphorae. The prestigious **Williams Selyem’s “Sonata No. 3”** Pinot Noir lot combines fruit from three of its prized estate properties, the Williams Selyem Estate, Lewis MacGregor Estate and Drake Estate.

Several of the auction lots were created as winery collaborations. Notably, Winemakers Matt Courtney of **Arista Winery**, Mike Sullivan of **Benovia Winery** and Bob Cabral of **Three Sticks Wines** teamed up to produce a 10-case Russian

River Valley "A Celebration of Saralee" lot which pays tribute to Sonoma County icon Saralee McClelland Kunde. Honoring the longstanding relationship between the Rochioli and Stare Wallace families, **Dry Creek Vineyard** and **Rochioli Vineyards & Winery** worked together to create "Iconic Sauvignon Blanc Collaboration," a Sauvignon Musqué blend comprised of equal parts from the DCV3 Vineyard and the Rochioli Vineyard.

Numerous one-of-a-kind wines produced by Sonoma County's pioneers will be featured, including "A Tale of Two Winemakers", a Cabernet Sauvignon blend from **Gundlach Bundschu**, comprised of winemakers Anne Dempsey and Keith Emerson's favorite barrels from the family-owned estate and a **Pedroncelli Winery** field blend of Zinfandel, Petite Sirah and Sangiovese, "Noventa: Paying Homage to the Home Ranch" that the family has owned for 90 years. Those interested in the full varietal diversity of Sonoma County will be presented with offerings like **Joseph Swan Vineyards'** "Russian River Valley Rocks and Sand (Rocksand!)" Syrah, and "Close, But Not Tannat" from **SIMI Winery's** Landslide Vineyard.

The panel of Master Sommeliers, who tasted blind, selected offerings from the following producers as their favorites: Benovia Winery, Dutton-Goldfield Winery, Francis Ford Coppola Winery, J Vineyards & Winery, Joseph Phelps Vineyards, Joseph Swan Vineyards, Linked Vineyards and Westwood Estate Winery.

Situated on 92 acres of vineyards and landscaped gardens, the Vintners Inn in Santa Rosa will host the Sonoma County Barrel Auction for the third year. A gourmet luncheon will be provided by Chef Thomas Schmidt from the adjacent John Ash & Co. Restaurant.

Attendees to the Sonoma County Barrel Auction are licensed wine sellers, including retailers, restaurateurs and wholesalers, invited personally by participating wineries. For more information or to request an invitation, visit sonomawine.com/barrelauction or contact: sommelier@fullcirclewinesolutions.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 200 wineries and affiliated businesses throughout the county. To learn more about Sonoma County Vintners, visit: www.SonomaWine.com.

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