2009 Sonoma County Pinot Noir vintage and other accolades keep region in the spotlight

***January 9, 2012 – Santa Rosa, CA*:** 2011 was a great year for Sonoma County wines, as the wine industry's top publications and wine competitions honored many of the region's top producers, and the 2009 vintage of Sonoma County wines, most notably Pinot Noir, garnered outstanding coverage.

The 2011 San Francisco Chronicle's Top 100 American Wines report featured 27 Sonoma County wines, significantly more wines than any other region in the report. Sonoma County wineries were prominent among the sparkling wine, chardonnay, pinot noir, zinfandel and cabernet sauvignon categories, a testament to the diversity of the region's appellations and climates.

In the Wine Spectator's October 15, 2011 California Pinot Noir issue, the cover story headline proclaims "How Pinot Became Sonoma's Signature", a huge coup acknowledging the evolution taking place as vintners and growers learn more about their sites, clones and nuances in winemaking. Senior editor James Laube's story, entitled "California's Burgundy" chronicles the wine's evolution in Sonoma County from the 1980s to the 2009 vintage and highlights 20 Sonoma County producers and 15 great vineyard sites before extolling the virtues of the critically acclaimed 2009 vintage. "In terms of the number of great wines, '09 is head and shoulders above any other vintage in California Pinot Noir history," Laube writes.

In another exciting acknowledgement of Sonoma County's Pinot Noir quality, 2009 Kosta Browne Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir was ranked the number one wine in the Wine Spectator Magazine's Top 100 Wines of 2011, a huge accomplishment considering that over 16,000 wines from all over the world are reviewed each year by the publication. Ten Sonoma County wines were in the Wine Spectator Top 100 for 2011 from regions throughout the county, including Russian River Valley, Sonoma Coast, Alexander Valley, and Knights Valley.

The Wine Enthusiast honored Pinot Noir from Sonoma County in 2011 by naming Joseph Swan Vineyard's 2007 Trenton Estate Pinot Noir the number two wine of the year in their annual "Enthusiast 100 Must-Have Wines of the Year". Editors of the publication also lauded Bob Cabral from Williams Selyem, one of Russian River Valley, Sonoma County's pioneering wineries, as Winemaker of the Year in their 2011 Wine Star Awards. Russian River Valley was

nominated this year as the top region of the year, as well.

Sonoma County Chardonnay also earned kudos from top wine publications. The October 2011 issue of Wine & Spirits “Best Chardonnays of 2011” featured 2009 Flowers Sonoma Coast Camp Meeting Ridge and 2009 Flowers Sonoma Coast Chardonnay in the top two spots among 579 wines reviewed. Two wines from Iron Horse Vineyards, 2009 Green Valley Native Yeast Chardonnay and 2009 Green Valley Heritage Clone Chardonnay, took two more of the top six slots in the review.

Diane Wilson, of Wilson Winery in Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma County, won several awards including “Best Wine by a Woman Winemaker” at the 2011 International Women’s Wine Competition.

About Sonoma County Vintners

Sonoma County Vintners is the leading voice of Sonoma County wine, dedicated to increasing awareness and improving the quality image of its wines to consumers, media, and trade locally and globally. With almost 65,000 vineyard acres planted among the county’s 15 American Viticultural Areas (AVAs), Sonoma County is considered one of the world’s premier winegrowing regions, producing an unparalleled range of varietals and wine styles. SCV has promoted this diversity and quality since 1944, and currently represents more than 175 member wineries and 25 Affiliate Members. For more information on the wines and wineries of Sonoma County, visit www.sonomawine.com.