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Photos available upon request

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**RHONE RANGERS TO HONOR ROBERT HAAS
WITH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

Award to be given April 5th at annual winemaker dinner celebration in San Francisco

Albion, CA – The Rhone Rangers organization will make its second annual Lifetime Achievement Award on Saturday, April 5, 2014 to recognize the significant contributions made by an individual to the American Rhone wine movement. This year's award will be given to Robert Haas, Partner and Founder, Tablas Creek Vineyard, Paso Robles, CA.

Mr. Haas began his career in the 1950's, traveling through wine caves in France searching for fine wines to bring to America for M Lehmann, Inc., his family's retail shop in New York City, while forging lifelong relationships with many of France's most celebrated wine producers. In the 1960's, he met the Perrins of Chateau de Beaucastel, became their American importer through his company Vineyard Brands, and worked with them to introduce Americans to the great wines of the Rhône Valley and Chateaneuf du Pape.

In 1989 the Haas and Perrin families, convinced that California was ideally suited to the growing of the Rhône's traditional grape varieties, established Tablas Creek Vineyard in Paso Robles, CA. They shepherded the eight most important Rhône grape varieties through the USDA quarantine process and made these high quality clones, propagated in high-tech greenhouses on the Tablas Creek property, available to growers around America. They continue this work today through a partnership with NovaVine nursery; more than 600 growers and wineries around the country have planted Tablas Creek clones, spurring the growth of the modern Rhone Ranger movement in America.

Asked about his vision for bringing vines from France to California, Haas explains, "In the early 1970's Jean-Pierre Perrin accompanied me when I was visiting my then Napa Valley suppliers of Vineyard Brands: Freemark Abbey, Chappellet, Clos du Val and Phelps. We took a little tour of the valley and Pierre remarked that it was extraordinary that, in a climate that seemed extremely apt, there were none of the grape varieties traditional to the Rhône. It was this experience that was the beginning of the idea of doing it ourselves."

The Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to Mr. Haas on Saturday, April 5, 2014 at the Rhone Rangers Annual Winemaker Dinner at the General's Residence on San Francisco's Fort Mason. Tickets are \$150 each and may be purchased online at www.rhonerangers.org. Attendees may also purchase a Weekend Pass to the 17th Annual Weekend Celebration of American Rhone Wines, which includes admission to the Winemaker Dinner on Saturday evening, as well as two seminars and the Grand Tasting on Sunday, April 6, across the bay at the Craneway Pavilion at Ford Point, Richmond. For more information see www.rhonerangers.org.

About the Rhone Rangers

The Rhone Rangers are a group of roughly 150 wineries dedicated to making wines from the 22 grape varieties originally made famous in France's Rhône Valley. These varieties range from the better-known Syrah and Viognier to the up-and-coming Mourvèdre, Grenache and Roussanne, to obscure (but delicious) grapes like Counoise and Picpoul.

The Rhone Rangers started from a small gathering of American vintners who began meeting informally in the 1980s. As their numbers expanded, the group organized under the name "Rhone Rangers." The Rhone Rangers is a non-profit organization focused on promoting the enjoyment of Rhône varietal wines produced in the United States. These grapes include the 22 traditional varieties approved by the French government for the Côtes du Rhône, as well as Durif (Petite Sirah). In order for a winery to join the Rhone Rangers, they must produce at least one wine that contains 75% of any single approved varietal (or combination of these varieties). For more information, please visit www.rhonerangers.org.

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