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Photos available upon request

**More than 100 Vintners to Gather in San Francisco for the
16th Annual Rhone Rangers
Weekend Celebration of American Rhone Wines
March 22-23, 2013**

San Francisco, Calif. (January 16, 2013) For two days wine lovers will gather for the 16th Annual Rhone Rangers San Francisco Celebration of American Rhone Wines at Fort Mason's Festival Pavilion, during the largest American Rhone wine event in the country. Over 2,000 consumers and members of the trade are expected to attend for the opportunity to taste over 500 of the best American Rhone wines from more than 100 Rhone Rangers member wineries. Tickets are now on sale at:

WWW.RHONERANGERS.ORG.

"We look forward to the San Francisco events every year. This year's grand tasting takes place on a Saturday to better accommodate our "Sidekick" consumer members who have told us they prefer Saturday events over Sunday events," explained David Gates, President Elect of the Rhone Rangers Board of Directors. The 16th annual San Francisco events will include two days of celebration:

Friday, March 22, 6 PM, Winemaker Dinner

Fifteen wineries will join together for a winemaker dinner and live auction at the historic General's Residence at Fort Mason. During the dinner, the Rhone Rangers will award their first Lifetime Achievement Award. The award recognizes those who have made significant and consistent contributions to the world of American Rhone varietal wines and the inaugural award will be presented to Randall Grahm, Winemaker and President-for-Life, Bonny Doon Vineyard. The dinner will be catered by Sonoma's the Girl & the Fig Restaurant (famous for its "Rhone Alone" wine list). Following dinner, a live auction will feature wine, unique wine country experiences and travel packages donated by the host winemakers. Proceeds from the auction will benefit the Rhone Rangers Scholarship Fund, which provides grants and scholarships to help educate the next generation of American Rhone winemakers.

Saturday, March 24, 10 AM – 12:45 PM Seminar Series

This year's seminar series will cover two exciting topics:

"Old World Inspiration, New World Innovation" with wine importer, Patrick Will, Vice President of VINTUS. This seminar will include benchmark wines from Guigal (Condrieu, Tavel, Châteauneuf du Pape and Côte Rôtie), as well as wines from Rhone Ranger winery members who were inspired to create their "Rhone style wines" while using innovative new world craftsmanship.

“*Mourvèdre: A Rising Star in the World of American Rhones*” will feature six wines (red and rosé) that are based on the grape known as Mourvèdre, Mataro, Monastrell and at least fifty other names depending on where it is grown.

Both seminars will be moderated by Jon Bonné, Wine Editor, *San Francisco Chronicle*. One ticket, the Saturday Events Pass, will admit guests to both seminars, as well as the Trade & VIP Tasting beginning at 1 PM.

Saturday, March 23, 1-3 PM

Trade & VIP Tasting. Over 100 wineries will pour more than 500 wines for members of the wine trade and media. Tickets are complimentary for trade and media who directly influence the purchase of wine including sommeliers, wine writers, wine retailers, wine wholesalers, distributors and brokers. Credentialed members of the wine trade and wine media can register at: www.rhonerangers.org.

Saturday, March 23, 3-6 PM

Grand Tasting General Admission. The wine tasting continues with consumers invited to enter from 3-6 PM to sample wines from over 100 wineries pouring more than 500 wines. Specialty food vendors will also sample gourmet food items and food trucks will provide more substantive food items for purchase.

PURCHASE TICKETS

Tickets are now on sale and the public is invited to purchase them online at:

WWW.RHONERANGERS.ORG. For more information call 800 467-0163.

Ticket prices are as follows:

- Weekend Pass: \$275
(includes the winemaker dinner, seminars, and VIP entry to the grand tasting)
- Saturday Pass: \$150
(includes the seminars and VIP entry to the grand tasting)
- Winemaker Dinner: \$150
- Grand Tasting: \$50 (advance), \$55 (at the door)

**Credentialed members of the wine trade and media
can register online for the Grand Tasting**

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 Rhone 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 Rhone varietal wines produced in the United States. These grapes include the 22 traditional varieties approved by the French government for the Côtes du Rhone, 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 varietals).