

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MONTEREY COUNTY VINTNERS & GROWERS ASSOCIATION**

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**UNITED BY WINE:  
MONTEREY COUNTY VINTNERS LAUNCH INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM**

*Monterey County Vintners and Growers Selected to Host Wine Apprentices  
from South Africa*

**Monterey, CA – September 12, 2006** – The Monterey County Vintners and Growers Association has been selected as the wine region of California to host a cross-cultural wine exchange program with the South African Wine Industry Trust (SAWIT) and the United States South Africa Wine Foundation. Five wine apprentices from South Africa will be working alongside vintners throughout the region for a unique six-week program. The group, all with winemaking experience in their own country, will be placed in the vineyards, wine cellars, and business offices of Monterey County wineries. Blackstone Winery, Cima Collina, Hahn Estates, Scheid Vineyards, and the Monterey County Vintners and Growers Association will be the hosts for the program.

According to U.S. program director, Judith Chambers, Monterey was selected due to the “climatological similarities with the Cape Winelands region of South Africa and because of the dynamic and progressive attitude of the Monterey County wine region, which was very receptive to the social development goals of the program. We have had tremendous support from the local industry for the program and we are hopeful that the program will not only result in a positive professional experience for the individual interns and winery participants but will also lead to some longer term business development opportunities between the region and South Africa.”

Developing new farmers and entrepreneurs along the full value chain of the wine industry is a goal of SAWIT, in line with the government's broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Act (BEE). This strategy is based on a conviction that long-term, sustainable development is only possible through the active participation of South Africa's previously disadvantaged communities in the mainstream economy. The program is in line with the over-arching goals of the Government of South Africa to effect a positive and productive transformation of the wine industry. A similar program has been successfully ongoing with the Burgundy region of France for the past 5 years.

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“Monterey feels like home. To find a community that is so supportive of this type of program has been wonderful,” noted Michelle Grimbeek, Cape Wine Academy Regional Manager. “The similarities in Monterey’s climate and varietals that are produced has been a perfect match with what we are accustomed to in South Africa. I am confident that the apprentices can directly apply what they will learn in Monterey over the next six weeks as soon as they return to their home country.”

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has declared September 2006 as “California Wine Month” and has applauded California’s vintners and winegrape growers for their economic contributions and steadfast commitment to the highest standards of excellence. The Monterey/South African venture kicked off on September 6<sup>th</sup> and is one of the keynote activities that the Monterey wine region will feature during California Wine Month.

“We are so pleased to have partnered with the South African Wine Industry Trust on this extraordinary opportunity to share winemaking expertise between wine industries that are thousands of miles apart,” commented Rhonda Motil, Executive Director of the Monterey County Vintners and Growers Association. “Short term, we will be experiencing the benefits of having qualified individuals assisting us during our busy harvest season. Longer term, we hope that this partnership will drive better market access with South Africa and establish positive business ventures with South African wineries.”

### **About MCVGA**

The Monterey County Vintners & Growers Association (MCVGA) brings together the talents and resources of members, partners and our community in order to promote and support our leadership in the art, the science and the business of wine. Founded in 1974, MCVGA is a non-profit organization representing over 85 vintners and growers in Monterey County. For a listing of members and additional information on MCVGA, please visit [www.montereywines.org](http://www.montereywines.org).

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