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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The 18th Annual North of the Gate Wine Competition Announces Award Winning Wines

Northern California wines impress judges with complexity and character

PETALUMA, CA – May 7, 2018 – Of the 302 wines entered in the North of the Gate Wine Competition in Petaluma, California an unprecedented 294 were honored with awards. And yet despite the overall quality of the wines entered, this year's esteemed judging panel of 12 had no trouble at all selecting just one overall winner. This year's Best of Show was awarded to Lewis Grace's 2015 Petite Sirah, which also won Best of Show Red, Best of Class, Best of El Dorado County, and a Double Gold award.

The North of the Gate Wine Competition, produced by the Sonoma-Marín Fair held June 20-24, 2018, is known for attracting high end luxury wines. Competing wines come from grapes grown in the wonderful Sierra Foothills all across Northern California to the beautiful California Coast. We have the consistently best wine producing regions in the world. More and more varietals are being grown and this year the judges had a difficult time awarding the best wines since so many were exceptional.

Not only is the competition one of the oldest to include all of Northern California's unique wine regions, but it also has one of the highest esteemed judging panels. This year four panels of professional wine judges met on April 26 to determine which would be worthy of their accolades.

The Best of Show White Wine was a racey 2017 Albarino from Imagery Estate Winery with bright acidity that enhances its peach and citrus flavors. It has won top awards at many wine competitions and should not be missed.

Rosé wines are making a come back and just in time for summer. This wine judging category has exploded and the Best of Show Rosé Wine was a beautifully colored 2017 Rosé of Pinot Noir made by Rodney Strong Vineyards. It is fresh and vibrant with aromas of strawberry and white peach as well as fresh acidity and a lasting juicy finish.

The Best of Show Red Wine also won the top award: Best of Show Wine, highlighting the incredible wine-making skills of two brothers: Trevor and Tyler Grace from the El Dorado region. Their 2015 Lewis Grace Petite Sirah steps out with an intense maroon color and an

equally complex boysenberry and cedar nose. The friendly pomegranate opening and chocolate finish complement its characteristic peppery kick.



Winery owner Steve Grace received this highly coveted accolade humbly by sharing “we are more than thrilled with the results. While it is a small competition compared to some, the judging panel is superb and it’s great to have exposure to that group.”

Case in point, last year Grace Patriot Wines received multiple awards including the Sweepstakes Award for their 2016 El Dorado Rosé of Pinot Noir.

Among the best by county this year were Brassfield Estate Winery 2016 Sauvignon Blanc for Best of Lake County, Handley Cellars 2015 Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir for Best of Mendocino County, My Italian Cousin 2015 Eugenio for Best of Napa County, Oak Farm Vineyards 2016 Tievoli for Best of San Joaquin County, Grindstone Wines 2017 Rosé of Syrah for Best of Colusa County, Lewis Grace 2017 Torrontes was Best for Sacramento County, and Schug Carneros Estate Winery 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon for Best of Sonoma County.

For a complete list of this year’s North of the Gate Wine Competition winners and more information on this year’s judging panel, please visit sonoma-marinfair.org.

Wine tasting of the top medal winners will be available during the Sonoma-Marin Fair in the beautifully landscaped Wine Garden. The best of the best will be poured on Saturday, June 23 during the fair’s annual Taste of the North Gate. Guests can mingle with wine makers, enjoy live music, and partake in a cheese and chocolate pairing. A separate ticket will be required and available for purchase at the gate the day of and in advance online.

The 2018 Sonoma-Marin Fair will be taking the summer fun “Beyond the Milky Way” from June 20-24, 2018. Enjoy 5 fun-filled days of FREE concerts, unlimited carnival rides, the World’s Ugliest Dog ® Contest, action-packed Pit Stop USA Sprint Car Racing, fun games & contests, delicious fair food, and more. For details, visit sonoma-marinfair.org or call (707) 283-3247. Be the first to know about all of the fun by following us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Plan for an out of this world experience!

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