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NEWS RELEASE

Indiana Winemakers Strive for Excellence

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. – Indiana's 1999 Grape and Wine Symposium was held in Bloomington, Ind., February 26th-28th. "Improving Everything We Do" was the focus for the two and one half day workshop that attracted over 150 winemakers and vineyard owners from Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, and West Virginia. Exhibitors from Maryland to California participated in the Symposium in an effort to reach the rapidly growing Midwestern wine industry.

Wine experts from Ohio and Purdue University, offered advice on improving wine quality, grape growing, marketing direction for a growing industry, and winery/vineyard relationships. Wine marketing expert, Doniella Winchell, from the Ohio Wine Producers Association discussed how to make marketing efforts more efficient and profitable. Workshop participants found it "exciting to be motivated by another's success" and very "important for my (their) economic future". Tony Carlucci, a well-known enology consultant and speaker, helped everyone understand how changes in the subtleties of grape and wine handling can improve the resulting product.

Workshop participants assumed the role of wine judges during the experimental wine tasting presented by Purdue University's wine technician, Ellen Harkness. Grape cultivars that are new to Indiana were made into 45 research wines for workshop attendees to evaluate and record tasting results. One judge commented, "This tasting is very important, as it helps you decide which grapes to grow".

The Indiana Grape and Wine Symposium is held annually and sponsored by the Indiana Winegrowers Guild, the Indiana Wine Grape Council, and Purdue University. The workshop continues to grow and expects continued growth in participant numbers and exhibitors in the future.

Indiana wine sales increased 26 percent in 1998 to total sales of 156,308 gallons. "The continued rise in sales figures shows the increasing importance of the Indiana wineries," said Steve Thomas, President of the Indiana Winegrowers Guild and owner of Thomas Family Winery. The Indiana wine industry has experienced a growth rate higher than 20 percent for the past five years. Increased quality contributed to Indiana wineries winning a record 207 medals in the 1998 Indy International wine competition, one of the five largest competitions in the nation.

To receive a free brochure on Indiana Wineries, call the Indiana Wine Grape Council at 800-832-WINE.

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