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For Immediate Release

**SMIFF, SIP, SAVOR, SPEND! SOLD-OUT SEVENTH-ANNUAL
PACIFIC COAST WINE FESTIVAL RAISES FINAL TOAST AFTER NETTING
MORE THAN \$372,000 FOR PACIFIC SYMPHONY PROGRAMS!**

Orange County, Calif.—March 5, 2014—The recent heavy rains in Southern California did nothing to dampen spirits or dissuade guests from swarming into the five-diamond Island Hotel last Saturday night for the spectacular seventh-annual Pacific Coast Wine Festival (PCWF). The event sold out early, drawing a capacity crowd of more than 300 guests, all of whom were dressed to the nines—gentlemen sporting dapper suits and ladies swathed in elegant cocktail dresses and wraps—highlighted by the ambient gold lighting throughout the hotel. The excitement permeating the air was as palpable as the aromatic wines as the evening got underway, beginning with a vast array of wine tasting opportunities and an enticing silent auction. A delectable wine-paired dinner followed, enlivened by a wildly energetic live auction of rare wines and unforgettable travel experiences.

The festival's final tally, after all the bidding was done, gave reason for one final toast—to the evening's fund-raising efforts, which totaled more than \$372,000 (net), all going toward Pacific Symphony's many artistic and education programs (\$152,000 more than the year before)! This year's PCWF event was generously sponsored by Land Rover-Aston Martin-Jaguar of Newport Beach and BNY Mellon; also, Phil and Mary Lyons, Pat and Bill Podlich, Sage and Pascal Houillon, and Fred and Wendy Salter. For more information on PCWF, visit PacificCoastWineFestival.com. For more information on the Symphony, visit PacificSymphony.org.

“When we first began, the typical response from the wine industry was: ‘Who are you? What is this event? No thanks,’ says Michael Kerr, festival founder and chair of Pacific

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Symphony's board of directors. "Now we're established as one of Southern California's premiere wine events. We have remarkable wineries pouring their wines and donating items for our auction. We struggled to get people to the first festival; now for the third year in a row, we've been sold out. And we've got more and better everything—world-class wines to sample from all over the world, with nine countries represented, and amazing auction items, including the single most-prized wines from the U.S., Screaming Eagle, and from France, Domaine Romanee Conte." He adds: "And we destroyed our goal! Yes!"

PCWF, which burst onto the scene in Orange County seven years ago, has cultivated a reputation as one of the most esteemed wine auctions in California, as well as a significant fundraising event for the Symphony. Co-chaired by Kerr, Fred Salter and Valerie Van de Zilver, this year's event got underway at 5 p.m., as each guest picked up a sparkling wine glass, armed and ready to begin sampling from more than 60 wines, both from California and as far away as France and Italy. Soft jazz music wafted through the air as guests made their way through the multiple rooms—sniffing, swirling, sipping and savoring a bountiful bouquet of wines and bidding on three sets of silent auction lots chock full with wines and specialty items. Waiters wandered nearby offering appetizer platters that included chicken roulade with oven-dried tomato, smoked salmon pancakes and tomato on bruschetta, while artisan breads, cheeses, grapes and berries were also available.

"This event has gained the respect of wine enthusiasts across the U.S., especially in our local area," says co-chair Van de Zilver. "Numerous wineries have asked to pour at our event, and some have supported us continuously through the years. The level of wineries/vineyards has been raised so that we have attracted more hard-to-find wines for our pouring part of the evening."

In an effort to raise the standard of excellence each year, this year the chairs enlisted the expertise of Tristen Beamon and Kyle Meyer of Orange County's BestWinesOnline.com, who carefully curated the tastings and wines included in the live and silent auction. To provide guests with a memorable experience, Beamon and Meyer contacted friends across the world to donate

items and attend the auction. Their passion for the arts and community is acutely felt and contributes to their efforts to craft an astonishing array of wines.

“Kyle and Tristen did an amazing knock-your-socks-off job of putting together auction lots of wine as well as the trips to Bordeaux and Rioja (Spain),” says Van de Zilver. “Their enthusiasm, class, knowledge of wines and ability to obtain incredible auction lots was a real plus. Having auction lots such as a case of 100 point wines put us in a whole other league and rates us among the country’s best wine auctions. An auction lot of Domaine de la Romanee-Conti is another example of wines found in only the most prestigious auctions.”

Throughout the night, guests had the opportunity to bid on and taste a meticulously selected collection of wines from wineries and winemakers across the world including Bruno Giacosa, Fattoria Felsina and Tenuta dell’ Ornellaia from Italy; BW Direct Bordeaux and Domaine Faiveley from France; Clos Figueres, La Rioja Alta, Vega Sicilia and Vibrant Rioja from Spain; Margaret River and Leeuwin Estate from Australia; Cantena Wines from Argentina; Peter Koff, Fairest Cape from South Africa; and Dragonette, Iron Horse Vineyards and Nickel & Nickel from California.

By 7:15 p.m., the silent auction had closed and guests were ushered into the grand ballroom to enjoy a multi-course feast (featuring seared filet of beef with truffle sauce and custard potatoes as the main course), perfectly paired with wines and crafted by the Island’s Executive Chef David Mann. The dinner tables were adorned by centerpieces with roses in the wine hues of red, orange and yellow, artfully arranged among oranges, grapes and wine corks. The evening culminated with a thrilling live auction led by auctioneer Jim Nye and featuring some of the finest and rarest wines, as well as one-of-a-kind experiences. A video spotlighted the most valuable auction item of all—a trip to France’s historical Bordeaux wine region created exclusively for the festival by sponsor BestWinesOnline and hosted by Beamon. The package went to one individual and three couples for \$16,000 each: Joel Sheiner; Ginny and Bill Davies; Maria and Ray Francis; and Suji and Reggie Gilyard.

Other top auction items included a trip to Napa Valley for an exclusive twilight tour and

tasting experience for six people at Opus One Winery, which was scooped up by Hezy Shaked for \$10,000. Clarence and Janice Turner had the winning bid of \$12,000 for a journey to Oregon Wine County, full of breathtaking views, exclusive wine tasting opportunities and a selection of Archery Summit wines. Kari and Mike Kerr bought an opportunity to join Meyer in Spain for “Red Hot Rioja,” a package that went for \$15,000 and included private gourmet meals and exclusive tastings at famed wine estates. The 17 live auction items brought the total to \$179,300. To end the evening, guests were treated to port and a decadent chocolate tasting.

PCWF supports the Symphony’s education and community engagement programs, including Heartstrings and Class Act. Heartstrings is a major community-wide program providing free access to concerts, hands-on enrichment activities and transportation for a range of underserved local residents in partnership with Orange County agencies. Class Act connects Pacific Symphony to a number of Orange County elementary schools each year, enhancing existing school music programs by providing additional musical experience through the Symphony.

“The event has grown bigger and better—as in quality of wines poured at the tasting stations and higher-end auction items,” says co-chair Salter. “Any time you can exceed the amount raised from the previous year, goal exceeded! We are starting a wine/dinner series and the first stop is Big Canyon Country Club on April 11. It will feature the cuisine of Chef Nick and the Bordeaux wines of Count Stephan Von Neipperg. He will attend and pour the 2010 La Mondotte and his 2010 Cannon La Gaffeliere.”

Pacific Symphony, located in Orange County, Calif., and celebrating its 35th anniversary this season, is led by Music Director Carl St.Clair. The largest orchestra formed in the United States in the last 40 years, it is widely recognized as an outstanding ensemble making strides on both the national and international scene, as well as in its own burgeoning cultural community. The Symphony has played a central role in the phenomenal growth of the performing arts in Orange County. Presenting more than 100 concerts a year and a rich array of education and community programs, the Symphony touches more than 275,000 Orange County residents—from school children to senior citizens.

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