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**TEXAS WINES AND FOODS IN THE SPOTLIGHT AT DALLAS'
FIRST-EVER "SET A COURSE FOR TEXAS WINES"**

Tasting Event Benefited The Wine & Food Foundation of Texas

AUSTIN, Texas – April 1, 2008 – Chefs, sommeliers, wine retailers, wine distributors and wine enthusiasts enjoyed an evening of Texas' finest wines and artisan foods on Monday, March 31 at Dallas Contemporary kicking off a new Texas Department of Agriculture GO TEXAN program to encourage restaurants and retailers to offer local foods and Texas wines to their customers.

"The growing number of Texas wineries producing award-winning wines combined with the 'eat local' food movement provides a tremendous opportunity for the GO TEXAN program to create more value and benefits to both consumers and producers," says Gene Richards, the Texas Department of Agriculture's assistant commissioner for marketing and promotion. "Our goal is to make it easy for local restaurants and retailers to procure Texas-produced foods and wines, and with the GO TEXAN Restaurant program, make it easy for consumers to find establishments that offer these Texas products."

The Dallas event, called "Set a Course for Texas Wines," was sponsored by the Texas Department of Agriculture's GO TEXAN wine marketing program (www.gotexanwine.org) and GO TEXAN Restaurant program (www.gotexan.org). A similar "Set a Course for Texas Wines" event was held in San Antonio at the St. Anthony Hotel early last month.

Proceeds from the event benefited The Wine & Food Foundation (www.winefoodfoundation.org) of Texas, which educates and recognizes culinary and viticulture accomplishments throughout the state.

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“The strong turnout at this event, only the second of its kind, proves that Texans want to eat, sip and learn about Texas wine and food,” says Rebecca Robinson, executive director of The Wine & Food Foundation of Texas. “The event was a great way to showcase Texas wines, locally made products like cheeses and chocolates, and beautifully prepared dishes made with Texas-proud commodities including beef, pork and shrimp.”

Participants sampled wine from the state’s finest wineries including: Alamosa Wine Cellars, Becker Vineyards, Brennan Vineyards, Delaney Vineyards, Fall Creek Vineyards, Flat Creek Estate Vineyard & Winery, Fuqua Winery, Grape Creek Vineyards, Haak Vineyards & Winery, Inwood Estates Vineyards, La Bodega Winery, La Buena Vida Vineyards, Landon Winery, Llano Estacado Winery, Los Pinos Ranch Vineyards, Mandola Estate Winery, Maydelle Country Wines, McPherson Cellars, Messina Hof Winery & Resort, Pheasant Ridge Winery, Sabor Azul, San Martino Winery & Vineyards, Sweet Dreams Winery, Texas Hills Vineyard, Texoma Winery, Vintner’s Cellar and Water 2 Wine.

Specialty dishes were prepared by Richard Chamberlain, chef/proprietor of award-winning Chamberlain’s Steak and Chop Houses and author of *The Healthy Beef Cookbook*, and Jermaine Brown, executive sous chef at Dallas’ Abacus Restaurant. Chamberlain created Peppered Beef Tenderloin with Maple Sweet Potatoes and Balsamic Syrup for the Texas Beef Council and Garlic Butter Poached Shrimp with Truffle Grits for Texas Shrimp while Brown prepared Pork Tenderloin with Creamy Polenta and Spicy Fig Sauce for the Texas Pork Producers Association. Additionally, both chefs suggested a number of Texas wine pairings for their respective dishes.

For more information about the Texas Department of Agriculture’s GO TEXAN wine marketing program, please visit www.gotexanwine.org, and to learn more about GO TEXAN products, visit www.gotexan.org.

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