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Contact: Doug Caskey, (720) 304-3406, Doug.Caskey@state.co.us

Canyon Wind Cellars Wins Best of Show in Annual Colorado Wine Competition

LAKEWOOD, Colo. – The Colorado Wine Industry Development Board (CWIDB) hosted the 4th annual Governor’s Cup Colorado Wine Competition April 5-6 at Metropolitan State University of Denver’s Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center. A total of 183 wines from 26 local wineries were judged by a panel of sommeliers, wine writers, consultants, winemakers and other experts from Colorado and around the country. The 2014 Governor’s Cup was awarded to Canyon Wind Cellars’ 2012 Petit Verdot from the Grand Valley American Viticultural Area (AVA) near Palisade.

“Petit Verdot often excels in Colorado as a varietal wine when it is almost exclusively used for blending in Bordeaux and California,” said Doug Caskey, executive director of the CWIDB. “This year’s competition exhibited the full range of quality of Colorado wine produced all across our state.”

“I was truly impressed with the quality and direction of Colorado’s wine producers. The industry has come a long way since I made wine here 46 years ago! Quite a number of the wines I tasted were beyond expressing merely the region but had the character of classics.” said Warren Winiarski, one of the judges and winner of the 1976 Judgment of Paris tasting. Judge Linda Murphy, writer and co-author of *American Wine* with Jancis Robinson, added, “The wines that made it to the sweepstakes round, especially the reds, were very impressive. Tempranillo,

Malbec, Syrah, Petite Sirah and Petit Verdot appear to have great potential in Colorado, and there was a delicious Lemberger which was a real crowd-pleaser.”

Canyon Wind Cellars, nestled along the Colorado River between the Book Cliffs and the towering Grand Mesa, is a family-owned, estate winery named for the mountain breezes that keep the fruit cool under the hot Colorado sun and protect the vines during the extreme winter freezes. Norman and Ellen Christianson founded Canyon Wind in 1991 and crushed its first harvest in 1996. In 2010, the second generation arrived as the Christianson’s son, Jay and his wife Jennifer, took over the leadership of Canyon Wind Cellars.

“We are very excited to have won this year’s Governor’s Cup with what is one of our favorite grape varieties,” Jay Christianson revealed. “It is great in blends but is spectacular on its own.”

This year also marks the first time that the CWIDB is assembling “The Governor’s Cup Case.” The Governor’s Cup Case is composed of the top cider, mead, white, rosé, red and dessert wines from the competition, along with the next six highest scoring wines. Wine included in the Governor’s Cup Case will be used by the CWIDB for marketing purposes in Colorado, across the country, and around the world. The award-winning wines will also be used for educational purposes at Colorado winemaker roundtable discussions to improve overall quality of Colorado wines.

A total of 152 medals, including 13 Gold, 59 Silver and 80 Bronze medals, were awarded to entries after the two-day competition. All entries were tasted blind—that is judges only knew the type of wine and the vintage and not the producer or the price. Dr. Stephen Menke, Colorado State University professor and State Enologist, directed the competition. Fourteen judges were recruited locally and from across the country. A list of the judges, along with their bios, can be found at <http://www.coloradowine.com/2014GovsCup>.

Many of the medal-winning wines will be poured at the Governor’s Cup Wine Mixer on June 6 at the Hyatt Place Cherry Creek. This mixer is a chance to taste some of the award-winning wines and meet those who crafted them. The \$25 ticket includes entry, wine samples and light appetizers. The awards presentation and tasting is a part of Colorado Wine Week, May 31 – June 8. The week-long celebration of local wine begins with the Manitou Springs Wine Festival, Saturday, May 31 and culminates with the Colorado Urban Winefest, June 8 at Infinity Park in Glendale, CO. Visit <http://www.coloradowineweek.com> for more information.

The 12 wines in the Governor's Cup Case are:

Best Red Wine and Best of Show

Canyon Wind Cellars, Palisade, CO: 2012 Petit Verdot, Grand Valley AVA

Best White Wine

Boulder Creek Winery, Boulder, CO: 2013 Riesling, Colorado

Best Rosé

Creekside Cellars, Evergreen, CO: 2013 Rosé, Grand Valley AVA

Best Dessert Wine

Ptarmigan Vineyards, Grand Junction, CO: 2012 Muscat Glacier, Colorado

Best Fruit Wine or Cider

Branch Out Cider, Fort Collins, CO: Perennial Sparkling Dry Cider, Colorado

Best Mead

Rocky Mountain Vineyards, Palisade, CO: Great Catherine's Spiced Nectar Mead

Other Wines

Bookcliff Vineyards, Boulder, CO: Friday's Folly White, Colorado

Bookcliff Vineyards, Boulder, CO: 2012 Malbec, Grand Valley AVA

Carlson Vineyards, Palisade, CO: 2012 Tyrannosaurus Red Lemberger, Grand Valley AVA

Ryker's Cellars, Denver, CO: 2012 Petite Sirah, American

Stone Cottage Cellars, Paonia, CO: 2012 Gewürztraminer, West Elks AVA

The Winery at Holy Cross Abbey, Cañon City, CO: 2011 Merlot Reserve, Colorado

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About the Colorado Wine Industry Development Board

The Colorado Wine Industry Development Board (CWIDB), an agency of the Colorado Department of Agriculture, is dedicated to promoting and furthering the development of Colorado's grape growers and vintners. The CWIDB supports the efforts of more than 100 wineries throughout the state, producing an increasing array of premium-quality wines. For additional information, visit www.coloradowine.com or contact CWIDB executive director Doug Caskey at (720) 304-3406 or dcaskey@coloradowine.com.