



Winery & Grower Alliance of Ontario

For Immediate Release

Winery & Grower Alliance of Ontario supports Provincial Government's Announcement Strengthening Wine Industry

Niagara, ON - December 16, 2013 – Today the Winery & Grower Alliance of Ontario (WGAO) announced its support for Premier Kathleen Wynne's new Wine and Grape Strategy for the industry. The decision by the Government of Ontario today to invest \$15 million per year – \$75 million over five years - to support Ontario wine is a significant investment for a key industry in the province.

"The Government of Ontario is a key partner in growing Ontario's wine industry," said Jim Clark, Chair of WGAO and President of Colio Estate Wines. "Today's announcement demonstrates that Premier Wynne and her government are committed to helping grow our industry and creating jobs here in Ontario."

Today's announcement also reinforced the importance of the LCBO as a partner of the Ontario wine industry, established a new Wine Secretariat in government, and opens the door for Ontario wine to be sold at farmers markets throughout the province. The WGAO supports these initiatives by the province and will work with the government to ensure all the efforts announced today lead to economic growth and new jobs.

"Ontario's VQA and blended wines are a key source of manufacturing, agriculture and tourism jobs in the province, and we are pleased the government has taken the time to truly understand the issues and opportunities that we face," said Patrick Gedge, President & CEO, WGAO. "We look forward to working with government and industry partners to determine how these funds can best be used to grow the industry, maximize our contribution to the Ontario economy and create jobs in the province."

About the WGAO

The Winery & Grower Alliance of Ontario is a trade association of leading wineries and grape growers working together to ensure the entire Ontario wine industry is robust, sustainable and profitable.

WGAO members produce over 85% of all the wine in Ontario, including both Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) and International Canadian Blends (ICB) wine. They also purchase over 85% of the grapes grown by independent farmers in the province, and represent 89% of all exports made by the Ontario industry.

A recent study determined that the wine industry in Ontario:

- Produces an economic impact of \$3.3 billion to the Ontario economy
- Generates 14,000 jobs for Ontarians
- Attracts 1,900,000 visitors annually to wineries, three times the visitors attending the 2010 Winter Olympics
- Provides \$644 million in tourism and tourism employment related economic impact

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For more information, contact:

Patrick Gedge
President & CEO
Winery & Grower Alliance of Ontario
Phone (905) 562-9426
Cell (905) 328-0169