

Media Contact: Lori Randall
Randall Public Relations
206-624-5757 / lori@randallpr.com

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Grand Vin! Raises \$290,000 for Columbia Region Causes *Third Annual Wine Celebration Quadruples Their Money*

Yakima, Wash. (August 5, 2003) -On August 2, from the terrace of the DeAtley chateau overlooking sweeping gardens and the Yakima Valley, 500 people watched as a fiery panoramic sunset and stunning rainbow appeared just as the first course arrived. Yet, not a drop of rain dampened the spirits of the Third Annual Grand Vin! auction goes as they raised over \$290,000 to benefit the **Yakima Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross** and **Washington Wine Country's** education and promotion programs. This newcomer on the auction scene raised \$45,000 in its inaugural year, \$75,000 last year, and nearly quadrupled that on their third annual auction, thanks to increased support and generosity.

The sounds of the Joe Brooks quintet and Rick Pilgrim's lilting piano provided entertainment as attendees sauntered over the vast lawns to peruse auction items and visit wine-tasting tables. When the bidding began, there was friendly competition for the top items, which included:

- Lake Washington's Gold Coast Wine Tasting Cruise Aboard The Yacht "Or Noir"
Gourmet dinner for 12 aboard the Italian-built 116-foot yacht, \$12,000
- Generation X Wine Industry Icons at the Barking Frog Restaurant, **\$7,000**
With Chris Hedges, Eric Dunham, Kristina Van Lobel Sels, Carmen Betz, & John Brookwalter
- Long Shadows Vintners: "Evening with the Dream Team," **\$18,000**
A famed Seattle Chef will prepare dinner for 12 couples at the Shoup home accompanied by the best wines from internationally renowned wineries
- **\$50,000 in five minutes!** 'Raise-the-Paddle' for victims of disaster and community preparedness contributions ranged from \$100-\$5000

At the post-auction dinner, Lucho and Chef Euteneir from Zesta Cucina feted attendees with Vanilla Stewed Fig in Fillo Purse, Honeydew Chilled Soup, Salad of Poached Gulf Prawns with Haricot Verts, and Tenderloin of Filet Mignon with Cabernet Franc Demi-Glace. Each course was paired with a superb Washington wine from Silver Lake, Pontin del Roza, Willows Crest, Columbia Crest, Eaton Hill and Sageland vineyards.

Now in its third year, the Grand Vin! Wine Celebration raises funds to help the local chapter of the American Red Cross provide disaster relief, including house fire recovery, emergency communications, local firefighters, and health and safety classes, including CPR and First Aid training. Executive Director Cecilia Vogt said, "The response tonight was amazing. Grand Vin! helps us accomplish a great portion of what we do in our life-saving work in Yakima County. It's wonderful to see everyone putting out so much time and effort to ensure everyone in the community is taken care of."

At the end of the evening, procurement chair Al DeAtley concluded, "I think we get better at this every year. The wineries, restaurants, and members of the community who made fine and imaginative donations, and all the attendees were very, very generous. We're just so pleased that the funds raised here will directly improve the lives of the people of this region, and are already looking forward to next year's event."

This year, Grand Vin! proceeds were evenly split, with \$145,000 going to the Yakima Valley Red Cross, and \$145,000 going to the Washington Wine Country consortium to promote regional development, increasing local pride, national awareness and tourism as it's related to the wine industry.

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Thank you

Editors Note: Photos are available by visiting www.yourphotoz.com

Grand Vin! Contact:

Janet Leduc 206.285.0514

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