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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LAKE COUNTY ABOUNDS WITH LOCAL AMATEUR WINEMAKERS WHO WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE 2007 HOME WINEMAKERS FESTIVAL

KELSEYVILLE, CA — Many talented home winemakers from all over Lake County will be participating in the fifth-annul Home Winemakers Festival, an event for tasting the winemaking efforts of dozens of Northern California amateurs, on Saturday, June 23, 2007, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Leo and Lorine D'Agostino, Hidden Valley Lake residents, will be returning for the third year to the festival. They'll bring a 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon and a 2005 Sauvignon Blanc this year. During past events, they've won a first-place award for their Sauvignon Blanc and a second-place award on their Cabernet Sauvignon. The D'Agostinos have made home winemaking a hobby for six years now. This is partially influenced by their Italian descent, according to Lorine. Though they haven't attended other amateur wine festivals, they're open to such endeavors in the future.

Ron and Cheryn Chips of Kelseyville had a first love before homemade wines: home-brewed beer. The Chips have been home brewers since 1991. After moving to Lake County and noticing the abundance of grapes, they decided to try home winemaking. The first year they made their own wine was 2002. According to Ron, Wildhurst winemaker Mark Burch coached him along on a few things. The Chips have been given winegrapes from a variety of local vineyards over the years, including those of the Pete and Cathy Windrem, David Windrem, and the McDermaids.

In their first year, the Chips worked with all they had. Cheryn actually crushed the grapes with her bare feet. This will be their third year entering the Lake County Home Winemakers Festival. Last year, the

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Chips took home a second-place ribbon and the People's Choice award for their 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon. This time, they're bringing a 2004 Syrah — their first of this varietal. They're also currently working on a 2006 Zinfandel, which is expected to be bottled in August.

Under the label Alegria, Thomasine Griesgraber, also of Kelseyville, will bring her wine again this year. Griesgraber was always interested in how wine was made and at some point, she and her husband John considered making their own. After a friend referred her to Conn Murray of the Clear Lake Performing Arts (CLPA), this consideration became a favorite pastime.

Since she began making wine at home in 2002 after learning with CLPA, Griesgraber has made a Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Sangiovese, an Italian blend, Gamay, Petite Syrah, and a Zinfandel. Her wine is one that CLPA serves at their benefit events. She has collected winegrapes from Frank Maxwell, Snows Lake, Devoto, Dorn, Stewart, Honeycutt, and Beringer vineyards, among others.

Griesgraber loves the process of watching her wine develop into something drinkable — even when it doesn't — and her favorite part is going out and picking the grapes. In the past she and her husband used others' equipment, but now have their own crusher/destemmer. Though she has only entered her wine into the Lake County Home Winemakers Festival, Griesgraber is open to attending other areas' festivals in the future.

Mario Richner of Hidden Valley Lake has been a home winemaker since 1995, when Lou Galetti from Calistoga introduced him to the process. In the beginning, Richner was using a lot of Napa wineries' second crops to make his wine. Today, he purchases mostly Lake County winegrapes — namely from SS Ranch and Horn Ranch in Middletown — to make his home wines.

Richner has participated in the Lake County Home Winemakers Festival for three years so far and has taken home a fourth-place ribbon for a 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon as well as a second-place ribbon under the category "best label" for the design of his label, DiMario. Richner also has won a second-place ribbon for the Merlot he entered into the Home Winemakers Classic at St. Supery Winery in Rutherford,

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California. The event benefits the Dry Creek-Lokoya Fire Department. Richner will bring another 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon to the Lake County Home Winemakers Festival this year.

Kelseyville's Mireya Turner might be the very newest home winemaker entering wines into this year's festival. Turner's Wild Horse Ranch 2005 Syrah is her first wine, made in 2006, and has already won her a Bronze from the 2007 WineMaker International Amateur Wine Competition. Supervisor Ed Robey will be pouring her wine at the Lake County Home Winemakers Festival.

Using her father-in-law Miles Turner's winegrapes, she began making wines after reading *From Wines to Vines* by Jeff Cox. James Kirk helped her through the whole process, through picking, pressing — even with their bare hands — racking, blending, and bottle washing. Janice Sanders and Joy Merilees of Steele gave Turner great advice on chemistry, Quincy Steele helped her with blending, and many others helped along the way.

Upon purchasing a CLPA commemorative wine glass for \$15, eventgoers may taste at any or all of the many amateur booths set up along the downtown area. During the festival, guests vote on their favorite wines and other categories, and People's Choice awards will be presented at the end of the day to winners.

In the morning before the festival begins, a professional judging panel will choose winners in several categories.

Local commercial wineries, including EdenCrest Vineyards, Dusinger Cellars, Rosa d'Oro, Shannon Ridge Winery, Sol Rouge, Steele Wines, and Wildhurst will be present to support CLPA's event, and some will even pour their wines for tasting.

Wine isn't all that's on the menu, however. Local purveyors will be selling food during the festival, including John's Market, the Saw Shop Gallery Bistro, Riviera Hills Restaurant & Lounge, Studebakers, and St. Peter's Catholic Church serving Mexican food — all from Kelseyville.

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A silent auction will take place during the festival with many donated items — some including overnight stays, wines from commercial wineries in attendance, and wine-related items. A number of artists and artist groups also will set up booths to demonstrate their artistic processes, as well as exhibit and sell their art.

Local pianist David Neft will perform during the festival as well as a headliner to be announced. The music of the day will be light jazz, bluegrass, folk, and similar genres.

A benefit for CLPA, the Home Winemakers Festival is sponsored by the Kelseyville Business Association and CLPA, as well as the Lake County Winegrape Commission.

The Lake County Home Winemakers Festival will be held in the central downtown area, on Main Street in Kelseyville. For more information on the Lake County Home Winemakers Festival or to register as an amateur winemaker, contact Ed Bublitz, (707) 277-8172.

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