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## **WINE COUNTRY CELEBRATION AND GRAND GALA RAISES NEARLY \$415K to promote Washington's Wine Country Region**

Seattle, WA - Over 600 people attended the 6th Annual Wine Country Celebration and Grand Gala on June 20-21, raising nearly \$415,000 for Washington Wine Country, a non-profit organization that promotes wine-related tourism and rural revitalization in the vineyard region. This weekend of events included a concert by Grammy Award winning jazz vocalist Steve Tyrell, Winemaker Dinners in the Vineyards, and a Grand Gala Benefit Dinner and Auction at the DeAtley Estate in Yakima.

The winemaker dinners sold out well in advance. The success of this year's Celebration is reflective of the caliber of wineries, winemakers, chefs, and sommeliers involved. The Grand Gala featured Chef Jason Wilson of Crush Restaurant and well-known Sommelier and Wine Director Jake Kosseff. The winemaker dinners featured the following:

### **Sheridan Vineyard in Zillah**

*With winemakers from Sheridan Vineyard, Fidelitas and Stevens Winery, and Chefs Roy Breiman and Justin Sledge of Salish Lodge and Spa*

### **Hedges Family Estate on Red Mountain**

*With winemakers from Hedges Family Estate, Col Solare Winery and Mark Ryan Winery, and Chef Philip Mihalski of Nells Restaurant*

### **Olsen Estates in Prosser**

*With winemakers from Olsen Estates, Long Shadows Vintners and Mercer Estates, and Chef Ken Sharp of El Gaucho*

### **Northstar Winery in Walla Walla**

*With winemakers from Northstar Winery, Pepper Bridge Winery and Spring Valley Vineyard, and Chef Mike Davis of 26brix*

"Even in today's struggling economic climate, over 600 people from around Washington State came together to show their support and raised over \$400,000 for this non-profit," said Allen Shoup, the event's Co-chair and owner of Long Shadows Vintners. "That figure begins to show how much statewide support there is for Washington Wine Country's mission of revitalizing the communities and economies of Eastern Washington through leveraging the rapidly growing wine industry and agritourism culture."

The Grand Gala Benefit Dinner and Auction was the highlight of the weekend, raising a total of \$380,000, including \$47,000 from 41 donors in a "Raise the Paddle" auction and \$63,000 in sponsorships from 13 different companies. These funds will go to support a variety of programs to promote winery tourism and year-round culinary travel to Washington's vineyard region, including a collaborative regional public relations campaign, dynamic marketing programs, and initiatives to spur economic growth and revitalization of the region.

"Ticket sales for the Winemaker Dinners went through the roof unlike any other year, said Janet Leduc, Washington Wine Country's Founding Director. "People's enthusiasm and desire to visit the region is truly striking. It tells me that Washington Wine Country has really taken a big leap forward in terms of the quality of the wines, the sheer number of wineries, and the overall magnetism of the region."

### **ABOUT WASHINGTON WINE COUNTRY:**

*Founded in 2003, Washington Wine Country is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting wine-related tourism and economic vitality by fostering collaborative regional partnerships throughout the celebrated wine growing region of Eastern Washington, where 99 percent of Washington State's wine grapes are grown. The region includes the Yakima Valley, Columbia Valley, Walla Walla Valley, Red Mountain and the newer appellations of the Columbia Gorge, Horse Heaven Hills, Rattlesnake Hills and Wahluke Slope. For more information on Washington Wine Country, please visit [www.winecountrywashington.org](http://www.winecountrywashington.org).*

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