

CHATEAU MONTELENA ANNOUNCES 25TH VINTAGE OF ESTATE CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Calistoga, Calif. - March 6, 2006 - Premier Napa Valley winery Chateau Montelena announced the March 1 release of its 2002 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon. This vintage marks the 25th bottling of Chateau Montelena's luxury cuvee Estate Cabernet.

"When I first started making wine for Chateau Montelena, the vines and I were both young. Though the vineyard was planted in the early seventies, it wasn't until 1978 that we made the first Montelena Estate Cabernet," says Bo Barrett, winemaker since 1982. Barrett, who has been involved with every vintage produced since 1972, adds, "We've worked to keep our wines consistent through the years and we're proud to produce a 25th Estate Cabernet that is rooted in the heritage begun with the 1978 bottling." Chateau Montelena bottled approximately the same amount of the Montelena Estate Cabernet in 2002 as it did the 1978 vintage.

Jim Barrett, proprietor, says, "The key to our winemaking tradition is our well-experienced team. Our vineyard manager, Dave Vella, has been with us since 1985 and our vineyard foreman, Placido Garcia, joined us in 1974." He adds, "Chateau Montelena has one of the few Cabernet Sauvignon vineyards that is more than 30 years old, and we've done very little replanting. That plays a big role in the consistency of our wines."

Accolades from wine critics speak to Chateau Montelena's success, throughout the years, in adhering to its motto to "*Make the best wine. Period.*" Robert M. Parker, Jr., in *The World's Greatest Wine Estates*, says, "Modern-day society seems always to be in search of new stars, but this winery has been a Cabernet Sauvignon superhero for nearly 30 years! Buying Montelena's Estate Cabernet Sauvignon is like buying a blue chip stock. They get better with age." Parker awarded a score of 95+ points to the 2002 Montelena Estate Cabernet Sauvignon.

Adds Paul Lukacs, author of *The great Wines of America*, "Vintage after vintage, Chateau Montelena Estate Cabernet stands out for both excellence and stylistic consistency. That's what makes it an American classic."

The 2002 Montelena Estate Cabernet Sauvignon will be available through fine wine merchants nationally, at a suggested retail price of \$95.00 per bottle.

About Chateau Montelena

Established in 1882, Calistoga-based Chateau Montelena is credited for helping California wine earn worldwide recognition. In 1976, Chateau Montelena was one of two Napa wineries to come out on top in a blind tasting held for a who's-who of the French wine and food establishment gathered at the Inter-Continental Hotel in Paris. Chateau Montelena produces Chardonnay,

Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel and Riesling varietals. The winery has been owned and operated by the Barrett family since 1972.