

2001 CHARDONNAY VINTAGE RELEASE MARKS SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE

CALISTOGA, Calif. (Oct. 1, 2003) – Chateau Montelena, the Calistoga-based winery that has played a major role in both the historic and modern eras of California viticulture, celebrates a major milestone this year with the release of their 30th consecutive vintage. The 1973 Chateau Montelena Chardonnay was awarded the top rating at the famous 1976 Paris Tasting, the results of which stunned the wine world and proved a turning point in elevating California wines to world-class status. The 2001 Napa Valley Chardonnay releases today, October 1, 2003.

“From the first, we adapted a European model aimed at producing fine wines that would express the flavors of the vineyard and the vintage and are structured to age well in the bottle,” explained owner and vintner James Barrett. “We’ve never deviated from that original philosophy, and it has served us well.”

In 1976, a “Who’s Who” of the French wine and food community gathered for a tasting in Paris. Four white Burgundies and four Bordeaux were tasted against six California Chardonnays and six California Cabernet Sauvignons. When the scores were tallied, French judges were certain that the white wine to which they had given the highest rating was one of their own Burgundies; consternation ensued when it was revealed that the winner was, in fact, Chateau Montelena’s 1973 Chardonnay. “Not bad for kids from the sticks,” noted Barrett, quoted in a *Time* magazine article dated June 7, 1976, when informed of the victory. The 1973 Montelena Chardonnay sold at the time for a rather steep \$6 per bottle.

In addition to its storied Chardonnay, Chateau Montelena is also revered for producing top-rated Cabernet Sauvignons, a record of consistency that has made the wine avidly sought by collectors around the world and one of the few U.S. wines to be the object of a successful futures program.

“Our philosophy has been the same for 30 years: Make the best. Period,” said Bo Barrett, winemaker since 1982. “We’ve been blessed with wonderful acreage in the Napa Valley with an ideal soil and macroclimate, and we’ve been fortunate to work with talented and dedicated people over the years who make up the Montelena family.”

Established in 1882, Chateau Montelena is one of Napa Valley’s oldest wineries. Purchased by the Barrett family in 1972, the vineyards were completely replanted and Chateau Montelena bottled its first vintage of Cabernet Sauvignon from the Montelena Estate Vineyard in 1978. Planted on St. George rootstock, which is resistant to phylloxera, they are some of the oldest producing Cabernet Sauvignon vines in Napa Valley.

Chateau Montelena is located in the Napa Valley hamlet of Calistoga at 1429 Tubbs Lane. The winery is open to the public from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. for wine tasting. Tours and tastings can be

reserved by calling (707) 942-5105. Fax: (707) 942-4221 or send an e-mail to reservations@montelena.com. Chateau Montelena can be visited on the Web at www.montelena.com.