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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**STAR-STUDED COLLECTION OF WINE LEADERS GATHER IN SAN DIEGO FOR
SOMMCON®, NOVEMBER 18-21**

*Over 50 Top Wine, Beer and Spirit Professionals Present Educational Seminars, Discussions
And Tastings Designed To Enhance The Business of Wine*

San Diego, CA (November 5, 2015) – Superstars of the wine world gather in San Diego, CA for SommCon®, an educational summit for wine industry professionals and serious enthusiasts held November 18-21 in San Diego, CA. The country's top sommeliers and industry professionals share their combined knowledge and expertise with 300 oenophiles during four-days of networking, education, round-table discussions, tastings and serious elbow-rubbing.

In this unique assembly of rising stars and established professionals from across the United States, listen to and network with the best of the best as they teach, share and present their passion points and areas of expertise in an effort to fine tune palates and assist in the pursuit of ongoing professional development.

Featuring over 50 panelists and presenters comprised of more than a dozen Master Sommeliers and Masters of Wine, along with an impressive roster of Advanced Sommeliers, WSET certificate holders, Cicerones, beverage directors, wine and spirit educators, educational institutions, winemakers, winery staff, wine and spirit retailers, distributors and importers, brand managers, hoteliers, wine writers and journalists – SommCon® brings together the best and brightest in the industry to enhance the business of wine. A sampling of Master Sommeliers and Masters of Wine serving as panelists and presenters during SommCon®, include:

- **[Gillian Ballance, Master Sommelier:](#)** Gillian Ballance's career includes opening up Cello in NYC, Wine and Beverage Director at Bacara Resort in Santa Barbara, Plumpjack's Group Wine Director, Wine Consultant and Sommelier for Bottega Restaurant in Napa Valley and Wine Director at the luxurious Cavallo Point. Gillian is currently the National Education Manager for Treasury Wine Estates. Join Gillian Balance at the seminar, [Cheese and Wine Pairings for the Pros.](#)
- **[Bob Bath, Master Sommelier:](#)** Bob Bath has spent more than 30 years in the wine and food industry managing wine-oriented restaurants (including two Wine Spectator Grand Award establishments), and teaching thousands around the world about wine. Join Bob at the seminar [Solution-Based Technologies To Drive Beverage Profits.](#)
- **[Chris Blanchard, Master Sommelier:](#)** Chris Blanchard has a busy itinerary managing the wine program at the legendary Chateau Marmont in Hollywood for its

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celebrity clientele and movie industry glitterati, as well as representing the incredible Vine Hill Ranch Oakville estate in the Napa Valley and running his own label, “Down By Law.” Join Chris at the seminar, Build Your Own Personal Brand.

- **Rob Bigelow, Master Sommelier:** As Senior Director of Wine Education and On-Premise Development, Rob Bigelow oversees all wine education programs for Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. While serving as Director of Food and Beverage for ARIA Resort & Casino in Las Vegas, ARIA earned a Five Diamond rating from AAA and a Five Star rating from Forbes. Join Rob at the seminar, Napa Valley “Connect the Rocks” Panel Discussion and Tasting.
- **Amy Christine, Master of Wine:** Amy Christine owns and operates Black Sheep Finds winery in Santa Barbara County and is currently a representative for Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant and a partner at Wine Ring, Inc. Join Amy at the workshop, Wine Faults: Yeast, Bacterial and Sulfer Defects in Wine, and the seminar, The Same But Different: Cross Comparison of the Same Wine, Made in Different Stylistic Format.
- **Will Costello, Master Sommelier:** As Wine Director of Mandarin Oriental in Las Vegas, Will Costello’s scope encompasses the Forbes Five Star fine-dining outlet TWIST by Pierre Gagnaire, MOzen Bistro, Mandarin Bar, the hotel’s Pool and Café, In-Room-Dining, as well as the banquet and catering and conference services selections. Join Will on the panel, Award Winning Wine Service
- **Brian Cronin, Master Sommelier:** Brian Cronin is a very active member of the Court of Master Sommeliers and has also served as an elected member of their Board of Directors. Brian now works as National Education Manager for Palm Bay International. Join Brian at the seminar, Digging In: Unique Terroir and Its Effect on Wine Styles.
- **Fred Dame, Master Sommelier:** The first American to have served as President of the Court of Master Sommeliers Worldwide, Fred Dame assists restaurateurs and hoteliers in developing their wine programs in his role as Vice-President of Prestige Accounts, American Wine & Spirits of California. He is currently the President of the Guild of Sommeliers Education Foundation. Join Fred at the seminar, Brunello Di Montalcino – A Master’s Perspective.
- **Desmond Echavarrie, Master Sommelier:** Desomond Echavarrie has won the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs Best Young Sommelier U.S. competition in 2004 and the U.S. Top New Somm competition in 2011 and in July 2012 and has worked with some of the city’s top restaurants including Picasso in The Bellagio Resort, Restaurant Charlie (Charlie Trotter’s), and Wynn Las Vegas. Join Desmond at the All Spain Seminar.
- **Erik Entrikin, Master Sommelier:** Erik Entrikin’s experience in the California restaurant industry has included positions as assistant Sommelier of the original Patina restaurant in Hollywood and Wine Director at Alexander’s Steakhouse in Cupertino and San Francisco. Join Erik at the Panel, Award Winning Wine Service.

- **[David Glancy, Master Sommelier](#)**: David Glancy is the Founder and CEO of the San Francisco Wine School and has helped over 400 students pass the Court of MS' Certified Sommelier exam. Join David at the Seminar, [Napa Valley "Connect The Rocks"](#) Panel Discussion and Tasting.
- **[Mary Gorman-McAdams, Master of Wine](#)**: Mary Gorman-McAdams is the Bordeaux Wine Council's market advisor for the US and Canadian markets. She has been the recipient of both the Trinity Champagne Scholarship and the Constellation Brands Award - international awards for MW candidates. Join Mary at the master class, [Bordeaux Beyond The Classified Growths](#).
- **[Emmanuel Kemji, Master Sommelier](#)**: Emmanuel Kemji acted as Ritz-Carlton Director of Wine & Spirits from 1988 to 1999, first at Laguna Niguel and then at the renowned Dining Room in San Francisco. He has been awarded the "Sommelier of the Year" award by the California Restaurant Writers Association, "Wine Director of the Year" in the Critics Choice Awards, and was honored in the August 1999 issue of San Francisco Magazine. Join Emmanuel during the [All Spain Seminar](#) and [Build Your Own Personal Brand](#).
- **[Geoff Labitke, Master of Wine](#)**: Geoff Labitzke is the Director of Sales and Marketing for Kistler Vineyards and is one of only 36 Masters of Wine in the world and has spent 22 years in wholesale representing some of the finest wines in the world. Join Geoff at the master class, Chardonnay and White Burgundy.
- **[Andrea Robinson, Master Sommelier](#)**: One of 21 female Master Sommeliers in the world, Andrea Robinson is a graduate and former Dean of the French Culinary Institute, and the winner of three James Beard Awards. Join Andrea at the Seminar, [Solutions Based Technologies to Drive Beverage Profits](#).
- **[Willi Sherer, Master Sommelier](#)**: Willi Sherer, is currently directing the wine programs at Redd and Redd Wood, Chef Richard Reddington's culinary destinations in Napa. Willi's Sommelier career ranges from coast to coast with notable establishments such as Aqua, San Francisco, Ritz Carlton, Central Park and Aureole, Las Vegas where Willi received the James Beard Award for "Best Wine Service in America" Join Willi at the [All Spain Seminar](#).
- **[Joseph Spellman, Master Sommelier](#)**: Joseph Spellman, is Winery Sommelier for JUSTIN Vineyards and Winery and has worked in Chicago's top restaurant cellars, including Tango, Maxim's, The Pump Room, The Park Hyatt Hotel, and Charlie Trotter's. He has been a leading wine educator, writer, and consultant, and has led wine seminars in the US, UK, Japan, and Australia. Join Joseph at the Master Class, [RIOJA: Classic and Modern](#) and at the seminar, Biodynamics and Sustainability.

SommCon®, takes place November 18-21, 2015 at the [Manchester Grand Hyatt](#) San Diego, California. With only 300 places available, pre-registration is required. For more information or to purchase Conference registration, visit: [SommConUSA.com](#).

ABOUT SOMMCON®: [SommCon®](#) is a leading conference and exposition for education and

training of beverage professionals and serious enthusiasts. Held November 18 - 21, 2015, in San Diego, CA, the four-day conference brings together industry professionals of all levels to discuss, develop, and lead the conversation on the business of wine. SommCon's® education is built by industry thought leaders for trade professionals and serious enthusiasts who have a passion for wine and spirits and an unyielding quest for knowledge. Attendees learn and taste their way through keynote sessions and educational classes, complete with a trade-only tasting and expo. SommCon® is produced by Fast Forward Event Productions, an event management agency specializing in productions for the wine, beer and spirits industry, fastforwardevents.com.

SommCon® is made possible by the experts who are committed to the continued growth of the wine, beer and spirit industries, Team SommCon members include: Joseph Spellman, Master Sommelier; David Glancy, Master Sommelier; Eric Entrikin, Master Sommelier; Eddie Osterland, Master Sommelier; Evan Goldstein, Master Sommelier; Geoff Labitzke, Master of Wine; Lisa Redwine, Advanced Sommelier; Lindsay Pomeroy, WSET educator; Adam Sensney, Certified Sommelier; Patrick Farrell, Master of Wine; Mary Gorman, Master of Wine; Steve Pagano, Hotel Manager, Marriott Marquis & Marina; Joshua Orr, Advanced Sommelier; Amy Christine, Master of Wine; Bonnie Graves, Certified Sommelier; Jörn Kleinhans, Certified Specialist of Wine; Ira Norof, Certified Wine Educator; Mindy Hewitson, D WSET, CWE; Jesse Rodriguez, Advanced Sommelier; Brian Donegan, Advanced Sommelier; Wendy Shoemaker, Advanced Sommelier; Tami Wong, Certified Sommelier; Molly Brooks Thornton, Certified Sommelier and Cicerone; Jeff Josenhans, Certified Sommelier and Cicerone; Jennifer Roberts, Certified Sommelier; Eric Runyon, Certified Sommelier, CS,, Rebekah Turpin, Certified Sommelier, CSW, FWS, and Skip Coomber, Owner, Coomber Family Wines.

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