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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**REGISTRATION OPENS FOR SOMMCON®, A FOUR-DAY EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR WINE INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS AND ENTHUSIASTS**

SommCon® Returns To San Diego Featuring Over 40 Educational Seminars, Certification Opportunities, Tasting Events and More This November 16-19, 2016

San Diego, CA (September 6, 2016) – This fall, [SommCon®](#) returns to San Diego bringing together professionals of all levels to discuss, develop and lead the conversation on the business of wine. Held November 16-19, 2016 at the Marriott Marquis San Diego Marina, SommCon's® education is built by some of today's most influential palates for trade professionals and serious enthusiasts who have a passion for wine and spirits and an unyielding quest for knowledge.

Boasting over 40 sessions, attendees learn and taste alongside the industry's best and brightest through keynote sessions and educational classes complete with networking opportunities, a trade-only tasting and expo.

The conference begins on Wednesday, November 16 with professional certification opportunities including the [WSET](#) (Wine & Spirits Education Trust) Level 1 Award in Wine offered by the Neptune School of Wine, as well as [Certified Cicerone®](#), the second level of certification through the Cicerone Certification Program.

The main conference is held Thursday, November 17 and Friday, November 18, and includes in-depth sessions led by industry thought leaders, round-table discussions, regional explorations, and The Trade Tasting at SommCon®, featuring over 100 wineries, breweries, spirit purveyors, and service industry brands. SommCon® concludes on Saturday, November 19 at the San Diego Bay Wine + Food Festival's Lexus Grand Tasting – Southern California's most exciting weeklong epicurean experience.

Young professionals under the age of 30 who have a passion for entering a profession in the wine industry or expanding their knowledge can apply to receive free conference registration through the [Young Leader's Summit Scholarship](#). Applications are due by September 15, 2016 and can be found [here](#).

Over 40 sessions will be offered at this year's conference, including:

The Nightmare Scenario, Dealing With a Difficult Guest – Through specific technics, humor and a sense of resolution, join a panel of experienced professionals as they navigate between some of the ways they have dealt with the nightmare scenario. *Presenter:* Eric Entrikin, Master Sommelier, Instructor and Examiner, Court of Master Sommeliers (Thursday, November 17 and Friday, November 18)

Re-Discover Bordeaux – This session looks at the current generation of winegrowers in Bordeaux. Take a tour across the different appellations of Bordeaux, learn their stories and

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taste their wines. *Presenters:* Mary Gorman, Master of Wine; Ira Norof, CSE, CWE, Director of Education and Events, Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits; Lindsay Pomeroy, BA, WSET Diploma, CWE, FWD, Owner and Chief Wine Educator, Wine Smarties (Thursday, November 17)

Digging Into Unique Terroir Presented by The SOMM Journal– This panel features representatives from unique appellations in Navarro, Spain; Alto Adige, Italy; The Veneto, Italy and Portugal. Taste two wines that best tell the story of each distinct terroir. *Presenter:* Eric Hemer, Master Sommelier, Master of Wine, Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits (Thursday, November 17)

Hungarian Furmint: Ancient Grape, Modern Wines – Previously known for its sweet Aszú wines, the Tokaj region is now introducing dry Furmint wines to the US Market. Discover Hungary's flagship grape variety and the versatility of the Furmint grape's range of styles and expressions. *Presenter:* Tim Gaiser, Master Sommelier, Wine Educator (Thursday, November 17)

Blind Taste With The Masters – Join world-renowned Master Sommeliers, Masters of Wine and San Diego's brightest somms as they battle it out in the ultimate blind tasting challenge through an exciting tasting experience of six wines. *Panelists:* Vary each day (Thursday, November 17 and Friday, November 18)

History of Craft Beer: Ancient To The Present – Learn how beer influenced the start of human civilization, gave power to religion, and was at the forefront of the industrial revolution. Discuss beer post prohibition and the rise of craft beer, and hear from the experts on what the future holds. *Moderator:* Maurice DiMarino, Level Two Masters Guild of Sommeliers, Wine Director, Island Prime. *Presenters:* George Thornton, Co-Founder, Home Brewing Co.; Greg Koch, CEO and Co-Founder, Stone Brewing; Mark Weslar, Vice President of Marketing, Karl Strauss Brewing Company; Jennifer Glanville, Brewer and Director of Brewery Programs, Samuel Adams, and Brandon Hernandez, Societe Brewery (Thursday, November 17)

The Role of Viticulture in the Evolution of Napa Valley Wines – There has been much said about the roles of critics and winemakers in the changes in Napa Valley Wines over the last four decades. As truly great wines reflect the origins of the vineyard, the evolution of Napa Valley winemaking can also be understood by examining changes in vineyard practices. Explore Napa Valley wines through the lens of viticulture with an engaging panel and tasting *Presenter:* Jon Ruel, Chief Executive Officer, Trefethen Family Vineyards (Thursday, November 17)

Extraordinary Tuscan Experience –Join Castello Banfi third generation Family Proprietor, Cristina Mariana-May and Master Sommelier, Fred Dame as they unveil the release of the 2010 Brunello Riservas from Castello Banfi and taste through the next generation of Banfi Wines. *Presenters:* Fred Dame, Master Sommelier, American Wine & Spirits, Cristina Mariani-May, Family Proprietor, Castello Banfi (Friday, November 18)

Diversity of Pinot Noir Within the Russian River Valley –This guided tasting examines the different nuances of the microclimates and soils that result in the diverse Russian River Valley Pinot Noir terroir. *Presenters:* Brad Alper, Winegrower, Square Peg; Guy Davis, Founder, Farmer, Winemaker, Davis Family; Bryan Kvamme, Winemaker, Martinelli; Boyd

Morrison, Winemaker, MacMurray Estate Vineyards, and Jim Pratt,
Winegrower, MacPhail (Friday, November 18)

Alsace Rocks: Exploring The Region's Grand Crus – This session explores Alsace's varied and unique terroir and its impact on the region's famous expressive wines. With 13 distinct soil types in Alsace, the region has the most varied terroir in all of France. *Presenter:* Josh Nadal, Beverage Director, NoHo Hospitality Group (Friday, November 17)

SommCon® is only open to 300 registrants, and for those in attendance, there are several ways to participate, with conference packages and single day passes available.

- **Full Conference Package (November 17- 18)** – Full conference access with choice of seminars, Continental Breakfast and Roundtable Discussions, Keynote Speaker and Winemaker Lunch, Hosted Tastings, Winemaker Lunch, The Trade Tasting at SommCon®, \$365 before September 16
- **Single Day Conference Registration Package (November 17)** – One day conference access with choice of seminars, Continental Breakfast and Roundtable Discussions, Keynote Speaker and Winemaker Lunch, Hosted Tastings, \$195 before September 16
- **Single Day Conference Registration Package (November 18)** – One day conference access with choice of seminars, Winemaker Lunch, Hosted Tastings, The Trade Tasting at SommCon®, \$195 before September 16
- **The Trade Tasting At SommCon (November 18)** –Free for qualified members of the trade until September 1
- **Lexus Grand Tasting (November 19)** – Trade tickets are \$75 each, to qualify fill out the application [here](#)

Sponsors and educational partners to date include: The SOMM Journal, The Tasting Panel Magazine, Napa Valley Vintners, Russian River Valley Winegrowers, Wines of Alsace, Bourgogne Wine Board, Furmint USA, Les Vins De Médoc, Sta. Rita Hills Wine Alliance, Vins de Bordeaux, Society of Wine Educators, Castello Banfi, Rias Baixas Wines, Wines of Germany, Côtes de Bordeaux, Left Coast Cellars, Wine Spectator, Somm's List, and Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits.

SommCon® panelists, presenters and speakers include: Jesse Becker, Master Sommelier, Market Specialist, Craft + Estate; Amy Christine, Master of Wine, Black Sheep Finds Winery; Fred Dame, Master Sommelier, American Wine & Spirits; Erik Entrikin, Master Sommelier; David Glancy, Master Sommelier, San Francisco Wine School; Mary Gorman-McAdams, Master of Wine, Bordeaux Wine Council; Tim Gaiser, Master Sommelier; Eric Hemer, Master of Wine, Master Sommelier, Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits; Geoff Labitzke, Master of Wine, Director of Sales & Marketing, Kistler; Joseph Spellman, Master Sommelier, JUSTIN Vineyards and Winery; Peter Koff, CWM, MS, President, Fairest Cape Beverage Company; Brad Alper, Winegrower, Square Peg; Bryan Babcock, Winemaker, Babcock Vineyards; Geralyn Brostrom, Italian Wine Central, Certified Wine Educator, Italian Wine Professional; Ken Brown, Owner, Ken Brown Wines; Randy Caparoso, Editor-At-Large, The SOMM Journal, Contributing Editor, The Tasting Panel; Jim Clarke, Marketing Manager, Wines of South Africa, USA; Guy Davis, Founder, Farmer, Winemaker, Davis Family; Maurice DiMarino, Level Two Masters Guild of Sommeliers, Wine Director, Island Prime; Wayne Donaldson, Head of Production, The Calling; Maureen Downey, DWS, CEW, Columnist, Wine-Searcher.com; Eric Flanagan, Founder, Flanagan Winery; Damon Goldstein, Truly Fine Wines; Randall Grahm, Owner, Bonny Doon Vineyard; David Hejl, Proprietor, Winemaker,

Domaine Della Winery; Kathy Joseph, Proprietor, Winemaker, Grape Herder, Head Fiddle, Fiddlehead Cellars; Greg Koch, CEO and Co-Founder, Stone Brewing; Bryan Kvamme, Winemaker, Martinelli; Cristina Mariana-May, Family Proprietor, Castello Banfi; Dewey Markham Jr., DMj Wineworks; Meridith May, Publisher/Editorial Director, The Tasting Panel, The SOMM Journal, The Clever Root; Luke McCollom, General Manager, Viticulturist and Founding Winemaker, Left Coast Cellars; Boyd Morrison, Winemaker MacMurray Estate Vineyards; Josh Nadel, Beverage Director, NoHo Hospitality Group; Frank Ostini, Owner, Chef Winemaker, Hitching Post II; Lindsay Pomeroy, BA, WSET Diploma, CWE, FWD, Owner and Chief Wine Educator, Wine Smarties; Jim Pratt, Winegrower, MacPhail; Dlynn Proctor, Penfolds Ambassador, Americas and Canada; David Ramey, Founder, Winemaker, Ramey Cellars; John Rielly, Fine Wine Development, Manager-West, Terlato Wines International; Jon Ruel, Chief Executive Officer; Trefethen Family Vineyards; Richard Sanford, Owner, Alma Rosa Winery & Vineyards; George Thornton, Co-Founder, The Homebrewer; Raj Vaidya, Head Sommelier, DANIEL; Rachel Voorhee, Director of Wine Education, Wine Director, Rodney Strong Vineyards; Mark Weslar, Vice President of Marketing, Karl Strauss Brewing Company; Jennifer Glanville, Brewer and Director of Brewery Programs, Samuel Adams.

SommCon® takes place November 16-19, 2016 at Marriott Marquis San Diego Marina in San Diego, California. For more information or to purchase conference registration, visit: SommConUSA.com and follow SommCon® on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

Discounted accommodations are available at the Marriott Marquis San Diego Marina for SommCon attendees, make reservations [here](#).

ABOUT SOMMCON®: [SommCon®](#) is a leading conference and exposition for education and training of beverage professionals and serious enthusiasts. Held November 16 - 19, 2016, 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, an event management agency specializing in productions for the wine, beer and spirits industry, fastforwardevents.com.

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