

**FOR: BLACKBIRD VINEYARDS**

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**B L A C K B I R D  
V I N E Y A R D S**

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**PREMIERE NAPA VALLEY BARREL AUCTION RAISES OVER \$1.87 MILLION AND  
NEWCOMER BLACKBIRD VINEYARDS SPREADS ITS WINGS****Blackbird's 2004 Merlot and Winemaker Sarah Gott Soar**

(Napa, California) - Premier Napa Valley Wine Auction raised \$1.87 million for the Napa Valley Vintners' philanthropic programs, and Blackbird Vineyards' five-case auction lot alone raised \$9,000 with its inaugural participation at the event. "We are thrilled by the winning bid of \$9,000 (\$150 per bottle)," says proprietor Michael Polenske. "It's a big step up from our inaugural 2003 vintage price of \$70 per bottle." Blackbird was one of only twelve Merlot lots included in the event; the one-of-a-kind five-case lot of 2004 Blackbird Vineyards Merlot was a blend of the finest Merlot lots in Blackbird's cellar, to which Gott added a small amount of Cabernet Sauvignon.

Polenske held inaugural events for media and trade at the Napa Valley Reserve to introduce the launch of Blackbird Vineyards the day prior to the auction. The day included a media luncheon with wines paired with the culinary delights of Boulettes Larder, a San Francisco epicurean restaurant devoted to organic fare and which embraces the slow food movement. The afternoon reception included over 200 key retail guests from around the country. "We are delighted that the notoriety of the vineyards and Sarah's reputation as a winemaker has piqued the interest of such a prestigious group of buyers," says Polenske. "Sarah is one of the best winemakers in the valley and a joy to work with. The day could not have been better."

Gott's resume includes Joseph Phelps, Quintessa, and Wirra Wirra in Australia's McClaren Vale. She is especially fond of Blackbird's fruit source and ideal location of the vineyard in the Oak Knoll AVA of Napa Valley. She is able to translate the fruit of the vine into the bottle with minimal interference from stylistic flourishes. "The quality of the fruit is what drives the quality of the wine," says Gott.

Founded in 2003 by Michael Polenske, Blackbird Vineyards is an artisanal producer of Pomerol inspired wines from the Napa Valley. Planted in 1997, the estate vineyard is located in the heart of the Oak Knoll District—a region appreciated for its moderate climate and deep, gravelly soils. The vineyard's valley floor topography presents optimum growing conditions for winemaker Sarah Gott to produce an elegantly styled, appropriately balanced red wine that offers short and long term cellaring potential. Limited quantities are available through an allocated mailing list direct from the winery and in the finer restaurants and hotels around the world.

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