

FOR: BLACKBIRD VINEYARDS

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**BLACKBIRD
VINEYARDS**

**BLACKBIRD VINEYARDS SOARS IN ITS SECOND YEAR AT THE ANNUAL
PREMIERE NAPA VALLEY BARREL AUCTION**

The 2005 Bordeaux Blend of Merlot and Cabernet Franc sells for \$3,600 per case

(Saint Helena, California)—The 11th annual Premiere Napa Valley wine auction held on February 24, 2007 raised \$2.16 million for the Napa Valley Vintners promotion and protection of one of the finest winegrowing regions in the world. With its second year contribution, Blackbird Vineyards' (www.blackbirdvineyards.com) five-case lot of a balanced Bordeaux Blend of Merlot and Cabernet Franc sold for \$18,000 (\$3,600 per case)—more than double the average selling price of all lots auctioned. "The winning bid of \$18,000 (\$300 per bottle)," says proprietor Michael Polenske "validates my belief that a Pomerol inspired wine can compete with the established Cabernet Sauvignons of the valley."

Blackbird was one of only a few wines consisting primarily of Merlot. Winemaker Sarah Gott crafted a one-of-a-kind five-case lot of 2005 Napa Valley Proprietary Red Wine—which is a balanced blend of Merlot from the Blackbird estate in the Oak Knoll District and Cabernet Franc from a single vineyard in Saint Helena.

Polenske welcomed media and trade attendees of the auction the preceding day at Martin (www.martinshowroom.com) in Saint Helena; a showroom balancing art, engineering aesthetics and personality. The afternoon included an intimate luncheon for select media paired with the allocated 2004 vintage of Blackbird and 2005 barrel samples revealing their balanced and elegant flavor profiles. The afternoon reception included over 150 key restaurateur, hotelier and retail guests from around the world. "These wines offer a certain cachet for an already premium wine list," said Alan Arora, the winning bidder of the Blackbird Vineyards Premiere lot, and representing Graycliff Hotel in Nassau, Bahamas. "They are a cut above the rest..."

Winemaker Sarah Gott (previously of Joseph Phelps Vineyards and Quintessa) comments that the blend for this year's Premiere lot "offers rich, full flavors of the Blackbird Merlot balanced by the intense bouquet and elegant acidity of the Cabernet Franc; it is truly a distinctive wine." Polenske believes so as well. So much, that Blackbird Vineyards will introduce a variation of this wine as an additional limited production bottling for their private clients.

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.