

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **CUVÉE WEEKEND WINE EXPERIENCE TO CELEBRATE INDUSTRY'S EVOLUTION WITH AWARDS, TASTINGS AND EXCLUSIVE EVENTS**

St. Catharines, ON, January 3, 2012 – Awards season has arrived and the 24<sup>th</sup> annual Cuvée Weekend will shine the spotlight on Ontario's wine industry. Cuvée has earned a reputation as one of the wine industry's hottest events, where hundreds of food and wine enthusiasts savour Ontario's best along side winemakers and industry insiders. Cuvée's red carpet celebration of Ontario winemaking excellence takes place Friday through Sunday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012, with a record 64 wineries participating. Tickets, which include admission to the Cuvée Gala and all Cuvée en Route activities, are on sale to the public now at \$200 per person.

The Cuvée Weekend experience kicks off on Friday, March 2nd, with the Cuvée Gala at Fallsview Casino Resort, the event's hosting sponsor. During the evening the winners of the coveted Cuvée Awards will be announced, recognizing the excellence of individual Ontario wines. Guests will sample the award winners, along with some of Ontario's best wines from the 64 participating wineries. Another Gala highlight is the food offered by celebrated restaurants and food purveyors. Participating chefs, who will be announced soon, will wow food lovers with live cooking stations throughout the Gala.

From Friday through Sunday, weekend guests can top off their experience by touring and tasting their way along Niagara's wine route. Forty-four wineries will offer exclusive tastings and seven restaurants will feature special meals and menu items as part of the Cuvée en Route passport program.

According to Liz Palmieri, Director of the Niagara Community Foundation, which presents the event, "Over the course of the last 24 Cuvée events, Ontario's wine industry has evolved to a point where our wines are being recognized as world class. Cuvée celebrates this evolution by recognizing industry excellence, and we're so pleased to be a part of the festivities."

Proceeds from the weekend go to the Niagara Community Foundation. Founded in 2000, the Niagara Community Foundation has raised more than \$16 million and granted over \$4 million from an endowment fund created to support local charities working in the arts, heritage, environment, social services, health, education and community development. Community foundations are one of the world's fastest growing philanthropic movements, with more than 1,100 foundations in 42 countries.

Tickets are available at [www.cuvee.ca](http://www.cuvee.ca) or by calling 905-684-8688. Cuvée en Route passports can be purchased separately for \$30.00 per person, via the same outlets or at participating wineries on Cuvée Weekend. Ticket and event information, details about each winery's Cuvée en Route tastings, overnight accommodation packages, and announcements about participating wineries and chefs can all be found on the Cuvée web site, [www.cuvee.ca](http://www.cuvee.ca).

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