



## New Ontario VQA Craft brands launched in LCBO

**Niagara, Ontario (October 14, 2005)** – Seven Ontario wineries will have a unique opportunity to showcase their premium wines at the LCBO through the Ontario Craft Winery program beginning this weekend in select stores throughout the province.

The Craft program is designed to assist smaller and mid-size wineries in promoting their products and help ease them into larger scale exposure through LCBO stores.

“This is not only a great opportunity for our Ontario wineries but it gives consumers the opportunity to purchase some great VQA wines that had not been previously available at the LCBO,” says Norm Beal, Chair of the Wine Council of Ontario (WCO). The program was jointly developed by the WCO and the LCBO.

“We are proud to put these new quality wine offerings in the spotlight in selected stores through the Ontario Craft Winery program,” said LCBO Chair and CEO Andrew S. Brandt. “We hope this in turn will encourage more customers to try them, giving participating wineries the public recognition and sales growth they deserve.”

The Craft program was launched in 2002 and this year’s new brands will be in 60 LCBO stores in the Toronto- Niagara region for the first year with the goal to increase the number of stores as the wines build brand recognition and sales. Ten VQA brands from the participating wineries will be featured in this program. In order to carry the VQA banner, a wine must past approval of an independent tasting panel and be made with 100 per cent Ontario grapes.

The following new brands will be featured in the Ontario Craft Winery Program: Willow Heights Baco Noir VQA, Willow Heights Cabernet Franc VQA, Willow Springs Baco Noir VQA, Willow Springs Chardonnay VQA, Angels Gate Cabernet Merlot VQA, Angels Gate Sussreserve Riesling VQA, EastDell Estates Cabernet Merlot VQA, EastDell Estates Pinot Noir VQA, Hernder Estates Cabernet Franc, Colio Estates Cabernet Sauvignon VQA.

“This is an excellent marketing opportunity for our winery because it will expose more people to our quality VQA wines,” says Willows Springs owner Mario Testa. Willow Springs, which has been operating for five years, is one of the participating wineries. Consumers will also have the chance to sample these wines during selected tastings at selected LCBO stores.

The Wine Council of Ontario is a non-profit trade association that represents Ontario’s four wine regions – Niagara Peninsula, Pelee Island, Lake Erie North Shore and Prince Edward Country.

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