



For Immediate Release

Wine Council of Ontario Elects New Chair Owner of Peninsula Ridge Estates to Promote VQA

Niagara, ON – July 4, 2005 – A former oil executive turned wine owner, the incoming chairman of the Wine Council of Ontario will be using his business acumen and passion for VQA to promote a “Buy Ontario first” attitude among consumers.

Norm Beal, president and CEO of Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery in Beamsville, was elected as the new chair of the Wine Council of Ontario (WCO) at last week’s board meeting. He replaces Paul Speck who has spent his three-year term directing the industry’s focus towards premium wine.

“I am excited by the opportunity to take this growing industry to new levels, creating greater market share and continuing to build consumer loyalty for Ontario VQA wine,” says Beal. VQA wines are made from 100 per cent Ontario grapes and must pass approval from an independent tasting panel to carry the label.

A native of Hamilton, Beal spent much of his professional career as an oil trader before pursuing his passion for the wine business by moving back to the area to open a premium winery in Niagara

“I would not have returned to Ontario if I did not believe in this area’s ability to produce world-class wines,” he said.

“Norm’s commitment to the industry and his passion for premium wine make him an excellent choice to lead the Ontario wine industry as it continues to grow and focus on quality,” says Linda Franklin, president of the WCO.

Beal is also committed to the community and has helped raise thousands of dollars for local charities. He has also pledged to raise \$250,000 for the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital Foundation’s capital campaign through his annual Jazz on the Ridge gala fundraiser.

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. These regions grow 90 per cent of the grapes used in Canadian wine production. Ontario is home to more than 90 grape wineries that produce 46 million litres of wine worth \$400 million retail sales annually. Directly and indirectly, 5,050 people are employed by the Ontario wine industry.

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