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ANNA MONTICELLI IS NEW WINEMAKER AT PIÑA LOOK FOR THE TRACTOR ON THE SILVERADO TRAIL

Rutherford, Napa Valley, California, April 2007---Anna Monticelli has been named winemaker for Piña Napa Valley; she assumed her duties on April 9, 2007. Most recently she was at Bryant Family Vineyard in the Napa Valley. She earned her degree in viticulture and enology at UC Davis. Her first harvest was at Chateau Cheval Blanc in Bordeaux; she was the assistant winemaker at Seavey Vineyard in Napa Valley and then also the assistant winemaker at Bryant before coming to Piña. During her undergraduate years, she spent a year studying at the Sorbonne in Paris and she took summer courses in Rome and Cracow. Anna speaks French fluently.

“We are delighted to add someone with Anna’s range of experience to our team,” said Larry Piña, in making the announcement. Brothers John, Larry, Randy and Davie Piña run their small family winery in Rutherford in the heart of the Napa Valley. The winery is located at 8060 Silverado Trail (in the Rutherford District, north of Skellenger Lane), Napa (the mailing address is P.O.B. 376, Rutherford 94573). Visitors need to make an appointment at 707/738-9328; the winery is open seven days a week from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. You can also visit virtually at www.PinaNapaValley.com.

The winery’s current release is the 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon from the family’s Buckeye Vineyard in the Howell Mountain appellation; it sells for \$72.00 at the winery. The Piñas have assembled a family of stellar single-vineyard Cabernet Sauvignons from different sub-appellations within the Napa Valley; all of these wines are made in extremely small quantities, in some cases less than a hundred cases each.

The winery is also offering futures for wines to be released in 2008: 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (Buckeye Vineyard, Howell Mountain); 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (Firehouse Vineyard, Rutherford); 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (D’Adamo Vineyard, Napa); 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (Wolff Vineyard, Yountville).

California wine country has a number of small, family-owned wineries which make visitors feel especially welcome and which have a story to tell about vineyards they own and farm themselves. A six-generation-long example of this is Piña Napa Valley and the Piña family, who have been farming vineyards in this area since their great-great-grandfather Bluford Stice led a wagon train to the Napa Valley in 1856 from Missouri.

The Piña name (it means “fruit of the pine” in Spanish) is familiar as one of the most respected vineyard management companies in the Napa Valley---farming prestigious estates including Pahlmeyer, O’Shaughnessy, Cafaro, Dina (Cimarossa Vineyards), Emilio’s Terrace, O’Brien Family Winery, Gemstone, Howell At the Moon, Hughes, Johnson (Bisou), Kapcsandy, Roy Estate, Sawyer, Showket, Teaderman Family, Vogt Vineyards and Winston Hill (Frank Family Vineyards).

The Piñas’ great-great-grandfather Bluford Stice’s son Lafayette was a farmer and winemaker, owning vineyards where Stice Lane is today, just south of St. Helena; he was a leader in the wine industry of Napa Valley at the turn of the twentieth century as the winemaker at Inglenook Winery.

The Piñas’ great-grandfather Charles Glos homesteaded on Howell Mountain in the 1880s, almost in sight of the Buckeye Vineyard: their children literally walked 6 miles to school in St. Helena. Charles’s son Charles married Mabel Stice, Lafayette’s daughter and settled in Rutherford.

The family’s paternal history includes grandparents who left Malaga, Spain in 1911 to work in Hawaii for promises of gold and land and subsequently came to California where they settled on a farm in Rutherford in the 1920s. The grandfather of the current generation of Piñas owned a vineyard on the Silverado Trail near the current winery. Their father was the vineyard manager for a property which is today Plump Jack Winery. On the side he had clients for whom he managed their vineyards and by 1960 he went out on his own, opening John Piña Jr. & Sons. At that time vineyard and winery owners wanted ‘clean’ fruit which met primarily only the Brix requirements of a given winery. You grew as many grapes as you could, getting them as ripe as possible. This approach held true through the 1960s, where reps from wineries would only appear at harvest time and not visit the vineyards during the rest of the year. By the early 1970s the wineries became more involved and their requirements became more complex; by the late 1970s, the Piñas saw big-winery winemakers visiting their vineyards quarterly and today the family now participates with these winemakers in making all the important viticultural decisions throughout the growing season. They have seen the parameters for grapes become much more stringent and much less quantity-oriented. The grapes the family has farmed have changed in these decades also—in the 1960s they were farming Alicante, Petite Syrah, Palomino, Chenin Blanc, Sauvignon Vert, which are seldom seen today. Fundamentally the Piñas now are masters of a huge universe of complex variables--- soil, rootstock, clones, trellises, water and more. Today they can use infrared photography to analyze whether a cover crop should be disked, for example. They have demonstrated their leadership as viticulturalists and now have extended that expertise to their own small portfolio of single-vineyard wines from their own vineyards.

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