



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: Wine lovers can make their own wine from berry to bottle

Most wine lovers dream about experiencing harvest, making their own or seeing their name on a wine label. With First Crush winemaking experience in Paso Robles – now they can. First Crush is a unique winemaking adventure that will take wine lovers into carefully selected Paso Robles' vineyards to harvest their own wine grapes. The fruit will then be crafted into wine by a professional winemaker. When the aging process is complete, customers will have the opportunity to bottle, cork and label their wine, and will receive two cases of their own, custom-made, privately labeled wine.

First Crush is the authentic, total winemaking experience. It's the perfect blend of fun, work and a luxurious weekend winemaking safari. The one-of-a-kind adventure is for individuals, couples, groups and businesses who want to experience the complete winemaking process from berry to bottle. According to First Crush owner Becky Zelinski, this unique hands-on concept is not only new to Paso Robles, it's new to winemaking.

"To my knowledge, there is no winemaking experience like First Crush available anywhere else," Zelinski said. "There are other winemaking programs but all of them are missing at least one component of the First Crush program."

Zelinski said most other winemaking programs do not allow burgeoning winemakers to be involved in the harvest. Other programs also generally require customers to make at least one barrel of wine, which equates to approximately 25 cases. Zelinski noted that many people don't want or need to make that much wine and most can't afford it. There are also programs that allow customers to participate in select aspects of the harvest or winemaking process, but the customers usually don't get their own wine, or have any further interaction with the fruit they've picked.

Creating a memorable winemaking experience is only one of the goals of First Crush. Another goal is simply to produce a good quality wine. The First Crush winemaking team includes Becky Zelinski's husband Lowell Zelinski, Ph.D. who manages vineyards throughout Paso Robles, and world-class

winemaker Dan Kleck. Together, they will use their knowledge and expertise to select the vineyards and craft a palatable wine.

Lowell Zelinski is a soil-plant-water relations specialist with nearly 30 years of experience in agriculture production. He consults or manages vineyards for several Paso Robles growers. He has also worked as a University of California extension agent, taught at four California State University campuses and managed operations for two large agriculture companies.

Kleck has been producing premium wines for 28 years. He began his career making wines for Hargrave Vineyard, Bidwell Vineyards and Palmer Vineyards in Long Island, New York and has managed wine production for Kendall-Jackson Monterey Winery. He currently makes wine under his own label, Silver Stone, and actively consults or makes wine for several other Paso Robles wineries and vineyard owners.

Becky Zelinski is a former journalist, photographer and event planner. She currently manages and markets her husband's vineyard management company, and plans educational meetings and events for it. It is her photography from First Crush 2008 maiden winemaking experience that is being used to promote the business.

The Zelinskis plan to blend their viticulture knowledge, event planning experience and local contacts with Kleck's winemaking expertise to create a personalized, enlightening and enjoyable winemaking experience for every customer.

Every First Crush experience will begin on Friday evening with a welcome reception. Customers will meet their winemaking comrades and their winemaker, and have the opportunity to enjoy some of his wines. Saturday morning, the weekend winemakers will be transported to the vineyard. While enjoying a champagne continental breakfast in the vineyard, they'll meet their grower and learn about the vineyard.

Next, customers will harvest wine grapes alongside friends, family members or associates. They'll enjoy lunch in the vineyard, de-stem and crush the berries and even have the chance to kick off their shoes and stomp grapes the old fashioned way. When harvest is done, they'll have the afternoon to relax and refresh. The First Crush experience concludes Saturday night with a harvest celebration dinner featuring a different premiere Paso Robles' winery each weekend.

In 2009, there will be three winemaking weekends – called clusters. The pre-determined dates were chosen based on typical varietal harvest timing. The exact vineyard locations will be determined closer to harvest. The Syrah Cluster weekend will be October 9-11, 2009; the Cabernet Sauvignon Cluster, October 23-25, 2009; and the Zinfandel Cluster, October 30-November 1, 2009. Private parties or businesses of 10 or more, may schedule their own winemaking experience on a different date.

But the fun doesn't end there. Throughout the course of the winemaking process (12-18 months depending upon varietal and winemaking influences), each cluster will be able to taste and evaluate their wine, participate in winemaking and viticulture classes, as well as bottle and label their wine. Each wine-related activity will be a carefully planned, memorable event for First Crush winemakers.

The First Crush winemaking packages include two nights hotel accommodations at either the Paso Robles Inn or La Bellasera Inn & Suites, local transportation, a welcome reception, continental champagne breakfast and lunch in the vineyard, barefoot barrel wine grape stomp, a winemaker dinner featuring a different Paso Robles winery each weekend, complimentary enrollment to the Silver Stone wine club and first three-bottle club shipment, and two cases of a custom-labeled wine.

The Zelinskis are thrilled to introduce First Crush. They believe they've developed a uniquely rewarding experience, and are delighted to offer a service that will allow wine lovers to fall head-over-heels in love with winemaking in Paso Robles and leave them with fond memories of their First Crush.
