



## *Alexander Valley Vineyards.*

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### **CYRUS Shatters Record Price Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Champion Wine Auction**

Healdsburg, CA (PRWEB) March 9, 2011

The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo: Rodeo Uncorked! Champion Wine Auction and Dinner held on March 5 raised over \$1 million, with Lot 1 shattering all prior records. The room buzzed when the only two time Grand Champion and Best of Show winner of the event: CYRUS from Alexander Valley Vineyards was on the stage. AVV founder Hank Wetzel and winemaker Kevin Hall watched as multiple bidders competed for the wine. When the bidding ended, the sold out Reliant Center crowd erupted in applause to celebrate the new record price of \$210,000 for CYRUS. "That's the equivalent of \$17,500 per bottle, roughly 8 ½ times what the highest bid was per bottle last month in Napa," blogged Alfonso Cevola of The Blend. "It's all with friendly competitive cheer, as the proceeds in both auctions go to charitable causes."

Hank Wetzel said: "In the early 90's I wanted to create a wine that would compete with my immediate neighbors Silver Oak and Jordan, as well as any number of high end wines from the Napa Valley. Finally I wanted to create a wine that was a tribute to Cyrus Alexander and the very special place that we call home; a wine that could be looked at as the First Growth of Sonoma." Cyrus Alexander was a 19th century adventurer, rancher, gold miner, community leader and starting in the 1840's a grape grower. Since 1995, Alexander Valley Vineyards' benchmark red wine has been named CYRUS® in his honor. The estate winery is located on the original Alexander homestead; to date only two families have owned the property, the Alexanders and Wetzels.

CYRUS 1999 won the first ever HLSR International Wine Competition in 2004 and topped the wine auction that year with a price of \$47,000. Since then the wine events at Rodeo Uncorked! have generated over \$13 million in revenue with the funds helping the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo fulfill its mission of promoting livestock and agriculture and providing educational opportunities for the youth of Texas.

The Wetzel Family has generously supported the HLSR and hundreds other charity events throughout the country since Alexander Valley Vineyards inception in 1975. In fact, AVV had two other champion wines in this year's auction – Estate Cabernet Franc and Alexander School Reserve Grenache, which helped the HLSR reach the record breaking total for the wine auction.

"We believe in supporting the communities that have made Alexander Valley Vineyards successful over the years," said Hank Wetzel after the auction. "Texas has always made my family and I feel welcome and is an important part of our success. Tonight Texas has elevated CYRUS to a new level."

About Alexander Valley Vineyards:

Alexander Valley Vineyards (<http://www.avvwine.com>) is a family-owned and operated winery located in the heart of Sonoma's Alexander Valley, on the historic property originally settled in the 19th century by Cyrus Alexander, the valley's namesake. For 35 years, the Wetzel Family has been producing an array of estate wines that reflect the unique character of the property. AVV's vineyard practices were initially recognized by the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance in March 2006 and again in 2010 when named a Sonoma Green Business. CYRUS® is a registered trademark of Alexander Valley Vineyards.

About Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo:

The 2011 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo (<http://www.rodeohouston.com> or <http://www.hlsr.com>) is a Section 501(c)(3) charitable event, dedicated to benefiting youth, supporting education, and facilitating better agricultural practices through exhibitions and presentation. Since its beginning in 1932, the Show has committed more than \$265 million to the youth of Texas. Over 1,789 wines from 591 wineries from sixteen countries participated in the International Wine Competition and 1,147 medals were awarded by 15 panels of judges, consisting of local, national, and international wine experts.

Highest priced bottle each year, size & wine

- 2004 – Alexander Valley Vineyards CYRUS 1999 – 9L - \$47,000
- 2005 – Hangtime Cellars Pinot Noir 2003 – 9L - \$90,000
- 2006 – Raymond Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 2001 – 9L - \$200,000
- 2007 – Clos du Bois Marlstone 2003 – 9L - \$125,000
- 2008 – Stags' Leap Cabernet Sauvignon 2004 – 9L - \$201,000
- 2009 – Vina Robles Suendero 2006 – 9L - \$100,000
- 2010 – Davis Family Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon 2006 – 9L - \$120,000
- 2011 – Alexander Valley Vineyards CYRUS 2006 – 9L - \$210,000

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