



Press Release: June 16, 2008

Old Bridge Cellars teams with Hunter Valley icon, Brokenwood



Old Bridge Cellars, sales and marketing specialist, importer of benchmark Australian wines, is pleased to announce its distribution agreement with iconic Hunter Valley wine producer, Brokenwood. Effective July 1, 2008, Old Bridge Cellars will undertake all US sales, marketing and PR activities on behalf of Brokenwood, who joins the growing family of 19 landmark Australian producers in the portfolio.

A benchmark Australian winery founded in 1970 by Sydney trio Tony Albert, John Beeston and Australia's leading wine critic, James Halliday, Brokenwood evolved from a weekend venture for self-professed hobby winemakers into one of Australia's most reputable wine labels.



The Estate is headed by Managing Director, Chief Winemaker and part owner, Iain Riggs, who boasts an esteemed career in the Australian wine industry. Graduating from Roseworthy College in 1975 with honors, Riggs went on to become an inaugural Winemaker's Federation of Australia board member, Chairman of the Cowra, McLaren and Hunter Valley Wine Shows, and Nominee for Gourmet Traveller Wine Magazine's 2001 Winemaker of the Year. As Brokenwood's Chief Winemaker, he now oversees the production of some of the country's most long-lived Semillons, as well as one of Australia's most iconic single vineyard wines, the Graveyard Shiraz, which Australia's leading auction house, Langton's lists among the top 25 wines in the country.

The Hunter Valley has an extensive grape-growing history, the first vineyards being planted in 1825 by one of pioneers of the Australian wine industry, James Busby. Now, almost two centuries later, Shiraz and Semillon are known as the region's king and queen. Unique in the world of wine, Hunter Semillon is crisp and austere in its youth, yet with upwards of 10 years bottle age, rewards with a bounty of nutty, creamed honey characters on a toasty palate. Similarly, Hunter Shiraz is one of Australia's most regionally distinctive wines, displaying intense mineral, pepper and dark berry overtones in its youth, before developing savory notes of leather, spice and freshly turned earth after 5-10 years.

The Brokenwood offering ranges in price from Hunter Valley icons, the Graveyard Shiraz (US\$125) and ILR Reserve Semillon (US\$45), two highly-awarded and regionally expressive wines of great longevity, down to the Cricket Pitch line, blends of Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon and Cabernet/Shiraz/Merlot, retailing at around US\$20 per bottle.

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Gavin Speight, Old Bridge Cellars Wine and Marketing Director, shared his passion for the Hunter Valley, "The Hunter Valley takes Australian regionality to the extreme. Not in a fashionable cool climate type way, but rather in the gritty 'it takes guts, out of your mind' type thing. Torrential rain, blazing sun and a fair whack of humidity are just a few things winemakers in the region can expect at harvest time - Brokenwood's winemaker Iain Riggs calls it 'character building'. And yet through all of this the Hunter Valley produces some of Australia's most distinctive, long-lived wines. Semillons that are piercingly taut in their youth before morphing into toasty, honeyed beauties with age, or shiraz that tastes like it's just been ripped from the deep red clays of the jagged Brokenback Range - intensely scented and earthy with hints of the tell-tale 'sweaty saddle'."

"That's why we like this easterly, rugged frontier region. And why Brokenwood? Its iconic status and flagship wines such as the Graveyard Shiraz and individual vineyard semillons are about the best signatures of the area - representing estates such as this is what drives us here at OBC."

In putting together this agreement, Rob Buono, President, Old Bridge Cellars, commented, "We have been looking to fill our void in this very unique wine area. Most Australians think of Brokenwood Hunter Valley Semillons with great affection. We expect to illicit the same reaction from US consumers. The addition of the Graveyard Shiraz further expands our collection of landmark wines of Australia. Currently Old Bridge Cellars represents 15 of the top 101 wines as classified by Langton's Auction House, Classification IV."

Addressing the current state of the Australian wine business in the US, Mr Buono went on to say, "Brokenwood's ultra-premium positioning protects them against the current softness affecting the under \$7 category of the Australian market. Further, with the emergence of the alternative white wine category, we believe that Brokenwood Semillon, and the Cricket Pitch Semillon blend, will be interesting distractions from the crowded chardonnay category, offering further brand-building opportunities. The unique Hunter shirazes also represent a much needed alternative to the mass perception of what typical Australian shiraz is all about."

Throughout the month of June, Old Bridge Cellars will be working closely with the distribution network to develop market level strategies to facilitate a seamless transition on July 1, which will ultimately provide a national footprint for Brokenwood.

Old Bridge Cellars is a leading sales, marketing and importing specialist based in Napa, California. Representing benchmark Australian wineries from the nation's leading regions, the company is committed to developing Australia's regional identity and exposing the depth and breadth of the nation's wine offering. Wineries currently represented include d'Arenberg, John Duval Wines, Leeuwin Estate, Penley Estate, Giant Steps, Innocent Bystander, Balgownie Estate, Cullen Wines, Chambers Rosewood, Jasper Hill, Mak, Mount Mary, Shoofly, Yarra Yering, Yering berg and Zontes Footstep.

For more information please contact:

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