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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Renowned Still-Life Painter Eric Forstmann to be honored as Featured Artist at the 2017 Naples Winter Wine Festival**

***One-of-a-Kind Painting by the Artist will be up for Bidding at Live Auction***

Naples, FL – September 13, 2016 – One of the country’s foremost experts in realism and still lifes will be honored as the Featured Artist at the 2017 Naples Winter Wine Festival, to be held from January 27-29, 2017 at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort in Naples, Florida. Represented by Eckert Fine Art, Eric Forstmann’s still-life paintings include everyday objects that appear to be so real a viewer could reach out and touch them.

“Eric Forstmann is one of the most sought-after painters of our age, someone who has a unique ability to find beauty in everyday life, and we can’t wait for him to share his talents at the Naples Winter Wine Festival,” said Simone Lutgert, co-chair of the 2017 Naples Winter Wine Festival. “His contributions will be life-changing for so many children in our community.”

Guests to the Naples Winter Wine Festival will have the unique opportunity to bid on a painting by the artist created specifically for the Festival entitled "Intentions," featuring grapes and a glass of wine below drawings tacked to a wall. This oil on board still life draws inspiration from Forstmann’s "intention" to help raise funds for Collier County’s children in need: the drawings intending to be a painting, and the grapes intending to be made into wine.

"I am thrilled to participate in the Naples Winter Wine Festival, an organization that does so much for children in need," said Eric Forstmann. "The painting I made for the winning bidder is my small way of saying thank you for the enormous generosity and support that so many people lend to this event. I can’t wait to see it in action!"

Eric Forstmann studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston under the tutelage of the late painters Barnett Rubenstein and Henry Schwartz. Before turning 50, his works were displayed in four one-man museum shows at first-class institutions including the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Missouri; Butler Institute of American Art in Youngstown, Ohio; Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury, Connecticut and the Evansville Museum of Art in Evansville, Indiana. In 2016, he was featured in “Naples Collects” at the Naples Museum of Art in Florida. There, his art was showcased alongside masterpieces from Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and Pablo Picasso. He is also featured at the Norman Rockwell Museum in the exhibition “Rockwell and Realism in an Abstract World.”

Forstmann's work has been acquired by many prominent collectors, including Meryl Streep, Kevin Bacon and Warren Beatty, and has been featured in Architectural Digest and many other publications. In 2017, Forstmann will have a one-man show at Brenau University in the Leo Castelli Gallery in Gainesville, Georgia.

In addition to bidding on Forstmann's commissioned painting, guests to the Naples Winter Wine Festival will also have the opportunity to bid on one-of-a-kind travel experiences, limited edition cars, and unique wine lots during an electrifying live auction, all of which are dedicated to an important cause. Since its inception, the Festival has raised more than \$146 million dollars to support its founding organization, the Naples Children & Education Foundation, whose annual grants have provided more than 200,000 children with the services and resources they need to excel.

Ticket packages to the Naples Winter Wine Festival, limited to 580 guests, start at \$10,000 per couple. A \$25,000 package is also available that includes reserved seating for a party of four at a vintner dinner and under the tent. To inquire about tickets to the Festival, please contact Barrett Farmer at [barrett@napleswinefestival.com](mailto:barrett@napleswinefestival.com) or 239-514-2239.

#### About the Naples Winter Wine Festival

The Naples Winter Wine Festival is the most successful international charity wine auction in the world, bringing together renowned vintners and chefs with wine enthusiasts and philanthropists for a three-day Festival that raises millions of dollars for underprivileged and at-risk children. Every dollar raised under the tent funds the Festival's founding organization, the Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF), whose annual grants and strategic initiatives have provided more than 200,000 children with the services and resources they need to excel. For more information, please visit [Napleswinefestival.com](http://Napleswinefestival.com).

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