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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **The World's Top Master Sommeliers Will Share Their Passion for Wine at the Naples Winter Wine Festival**

Naples, FL – October 13, 2015 – Guests at the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Naples Winter Wine Festival will enjoy premiere wines poured by 17 of the world's top wine professionals, all of whom earned the coveted Master Sommelier distinction, the ultimate professional credential that only 230 wine professionals have earned worldwide. More Master Sommeliers will participate in the 2016 Naples Winter Wine Festival than ever before, elevating the entire experience. These experts come to the Festival from some of the country's most renowned wine programs.

"This group is at the top of their game, and it's an amazing opportunity to be able to learn from them and experience their passion for and knowledge of the wines being poured," said Sandi Moran, co-chair of the 2016 Festival. "Their participation is an important reason why this Festival is so special, and their contributions make a tremendous difference in the lives of children in need in this community."

Their many distinctions include winners of the Top|Somm Championships, Grand Prix de Sopexa, and Chaîne des Rôtisseurs award for Best Young Sommelier. Several attendees passed all three sections of the Master Sommelier exam on the first attempt, receiving the prestigious Krug Cup. One individual's journey to become a Master Sommelier was documented in the highly popular documentary film, "SOMM."

The full list of Master Sommeliers attending the Festival includes:

**Gillian Ballance** of Treasury Wine Estates in Sonoma, CA

**Bob Bath** of Culinary Institute of America at Greystone in St. Helena, CA

**Robert Bigelow** of Ste. Michelle Wine Estates in Woodinville, WA

**Brahm Callahan** of Grill 23 & Bar in Boston, MA

**Ian Cauble** of SommSelect in Napa, CA

**Michael Engelmann** of The Modern NYC in New York, NY

**Desi Echavarrie** of Realm Cellars in St. Helena, CA

**Jason Heller** of Dana Estates in Rutherford, CA

**Elyse Lambert**, Wine Consultant in Montreal, Canada

**Joseph Linder** of The Fairmont Olympic Hotel in Seattle, WA

**Sur Lucero** of Jackson Family Wine Estates in Napa, CA  
**Michael Meagher** of Jackson Family Wine Estates in Groton, MA  
**Christopher Miller**, Wine Consultant in Los Angeles, CA  
**Kathy Morgan** of Range by Bryan Voltaggio in Washington, D.C.  
**Jarad Slipp** of RdV Vineyards in Delaplane, VA  
**Larry Stone** of Flowers, Lingua Franca and Quintessa in Napa, CA  
**Laura Williamson** of Mandarin Oriental New York in New York, NY

Since its inception, the Festival has raised more than \$135 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 this year's Naples Winter Wine Festival, limited to 580 guests, start at \$10,000 per couple. Also available is a \$25,000 package that includes reserved seating for a party of four at a vintner dinner and under the auction tent. For more information about the Naples Winter Wine Festival, taking place at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort from January 29-31, 2016, please visit <http://www.napleswinefestival.com> or call 888-837-4919.

#### About the Naples Winter Wine Festival

The Naples Winter Wine Festival is one of the world's most prestigious charity wine auctions, 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://www.napleswinefestival.com).

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