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MARQUÉS DE RISCAL INTRODUCES “CITY OF WINE” AT SPECTACULAR NEW YORK CITY LAUNCH

New York, N.Y. (November 14, 2006) — Guests at the recent launch of Marqués de Riscal’s renowned “City of Wine” at the W Union Square Hotel were rendered speechless when seduced by a medley of surprises. All led up to a spectacular tribute to the new cultural wine destination and an unveiling of the ultra-limited Frank Gehry Selection Reserva 2001.

The “City of Wine” is Marqués de Riscal’s innovation for the new millennium—a luxurious cultural wine destination on its main estate in Elciego, Rioja. It was designed to offer visitors a uniquely interactive way to experience their wines through a “feast of the senses.” Deemed a “21st century château,” its nexus is the century-old wine cellar, the foundation of which was laid in 1858, and later extended in 1883. \$100 million dollars were invested in the 10 year project which also focused on the modernization of winery facilities, including the building of a new vinification area and an increase in vineyard holdings.

The event held for this 148 year old winery sought to reinforce Marqués de Riscal’s stature as the “trailblazer of Rioja,” as reflected by the perfect integration of tradition and innovation in the estate’s new architecture and in wines it produces. Kicking off the event was an intensive technical wine seminar led by Jose Luis Muguero—a Marqués de Riscal family member, board member and the Director of Sales, and winemaker Pedro Aznar—also a family member and board member. Seventy people were led through a vertical tasting of two of Marqués de Riscal’s finest wines – the hallmark Marqués de Riscal Reserva and the iconic Marqués de Riscal Baron de Chirel, the latter made from over 30 year old bush trained vines from Marqués de Riscal’s own vineyards. According to winemaker Pedro Aznar, “The vintages tasted were among the best of the last 15 years.” Upon tasting through the wines, Aznar stated that the “1994 vintage is powerful, with deeply colored tannic wines, the 1995 vintage yielded wines of great finesse and complexity, and the 1996 vintage produced powerful, concentrated wines.” He added that “the 2001 is possibly the best vintage since 1964, generating wines of great balance, finesse and aging potential.”

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Following the seminar, guests enjoyed the refreshing Marqués de Riscal Rueda 2005 and the vibrant Marqués de Riscal “1860” 2004 with hors d’oeuvres specially prepared by Michelin Star Chef Francis Paniego for a short reception.

At the luncheon, Jose Luis Muguero revealed three surprises to enthusiastic guests. The first surprise of the afternoon was a special performance by “Passion Flamenca,” orchestrated in tribute to Frank Gehry. Gehry drew his inspiration for the hotel’s titanium waved roof from the movement of flamenco dancers dresses. The passion and dignity of the Flamenco dance, much like a fine wine, created a profound, moving experience.

At the conclusion of the performance, a model—wearing a stunning dress created by Los Angeles designer Erin Lareau to reflect the hotel’s design—entered carrying a magnum of the Frank Gehry Limited Selection Reserva 2001 wine. She led five waiters—each also carrying a magnum of the Gehry wine—in a stunning procession around the room. The Gehry wine—100% Tempranillo—was produced from carefully selected grapes from vines over 40 years old and aged in American oak. Each bottle hosts a label created by Frank Gehry—one of the original sketches of the hotel—and is signed and numbered like a fine work of art. As the wine was poured in each glass, Jose Luis Muguero raised a toast to Frank Gehry (who was not in attendance), and announced the third surprise—Michelin Star Chef Francis Paniego—who prepared a spectacular succession of dishes for the luncheon. Chef Paniego, one of Rioja’s few Michelin-starred chefs who trained under Ferran Adrià, Spain’s “uber-chef,” runs the restaurant at the Marqués de Riscal Hotel in Elciego, Spain.

Murmurs of stunned delight filled the room as diners savored the striking presentation of each plate to the last delectable bite of every dish. Top among them included a *Tomato Tartar with Crayfish and White Gazpacho*, *Quick Fried - Slow Cooked Hake* in a saffron and garlic cream sauce, and *Eggs Gehry*—a slowly poached egg served with chopped porcini mushrooms and potatoes, topped with delicate silver and gold crackers created to reflect the waves on the hotel’s roof. The wines served at the luncheon—the Marqués de Riscal Rueda 2005, Marqués de Riscal Reserva 2001, Marqués de Riscal Gran Reserva 1998, Marqués de Riscal Baron de Chirel 2001, and the Frank Gehry Limited Selection Reserva 2001—were excellently received, and proudly paired with all dishes.



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The launch event ended with good cheer, positive anticipation of visits to the celebrated “City of Wine,” and the reinforcement of Marqués de Riscal’s position as the “Trailblazer of Rioja.”

About Marqués de Riscal

Vinos de los Herederos de Marqués de Riscal is renowned as the vanguard of tradition and innovation in Spanish winemaking. Founded in 1858, it was the first winery in Rioja that produced wine according to Bordeaux techniques, a completely revolutionary concept at the time. In 1972, Marqués de Riscal was the first winery to introduce Sauvignon Blanc in Rueda, which ultimately led to the formation of the region as a DO. It was also the first winery to create a “Super Rioja” wine: Barón de Chirel. Marqués de Riscal products can be found in more than 70 countries and its wines have earned some of the most distinguished international awards and acclaim as well as media recognition. Marqués de Riscal is imported and distributed in the US by Shaw-Ross, Inc. of Miramar, Florida.

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For press information or JPEGs of Marqués de Riscal wines and “City of Wine”, contact Cornerstone Communications, Ltd. at (212) 605-0370 or via email at mpalanci@cornerstonepr.com or joflanagan@cornerstonepr.com.