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## MERITAGE ASSOCIATION CHANGES NAME TO MERITAGE ALLIANCE; KIM STARE-WALLACE RE-ELECTED CHAIRMAN

**Healdsburg, CA, Friday, May 30, 2009**— The Meritage Association, a wine industry organization dedicated to promoting wines blended in the tradition of Bordeaux, announced today that it has changed its name to The Meritage Alliance and has re-elected Kim Stare Wallace, Vice President of Dry Creek Vineyard, to the post of chairman through April 2010.

“The decision to change our name to The Meritage Alliance really reflects the long-term goals of the group,” Wallace explained. “In the past, we’ve focused solely on Meritage producers. With the rapid emergence of social media and the continued growth of wine consumption, our outreach is now extending directly to consumers, making the organization more of an alliance rather than a governing body or trade group.”

Over the past year, The Meritage Alliance has reshaped its marketing and public relations initiatives. The group has developed a new website, a Facebook group and a promotional video, which will be officially launched in June. The leadership team is also working with a non-profit organization to develop a major Meritage promotional event for 2010.

Industry membership in the Meritage Alliance jumped to more than 225 wineries in 2008 — representing a ten-fold increase in the last decade alone. According to the most recent Neilson market study, Meritage and other blended wines are the second fastest-growing wine category. The only other wine category to experience faster growth than Meritage is Pinot Noir, which has been the darling of the wine world since the release of the cult movie “Sideways”

back in 2004. Among the larger wineries/wine marketers to embrace Meritage this past year are Costco and Robert Mondavi's Private Selection. Trader Joe's is also expected to introduce a new Meritage brand sometime this year.

In addition to re-electing Wallace as its chairman, the group tapped industry veteran Lee Nordlund for the new post as vice-chairman. Stephanie Trotter-Zacharia of Casa Nuestra was re-elected secretary and the new treasurer is Bill Smart of Dry Creek Vineyard.

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