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## **WASHINGTON AND WALLA WALLA VALLEY REAFFIRM SUPPORT FOR WINE TRUTH-IN-LABELING WITH 13 OTHER REGIONS**

*New Poll Results and Open Letter From Notable Chefs Are Latest Steps in  
Global Effort to Protect Wine Place Names*

**NEW YORK** – Today Washington, Walla Walla Valley and 13 other premier international wine regions came together along with renowned chefs from around the globe to call on policymakers to heed growing consumer demand for wine truth-in-labeling.

Results from a recent poll of U.S. consumers, conducted by Public Opinion Strategies, released today found that Americans, in particular, have very strong feelings about the role of location in making wine-purchasing decisions. Key findings from the poll of 1,000 U.S. wine drinkers include:

- 79 percent consider the region where a wine comes from an important factor when buying a bottle of wine;
- 75 percent report they would be less likely to buy a wine if they learned that it claimed to be from a place like Champagne, Napa Valley or Oregon, but in actuality was not;
- 84 percent think that the region a wine comes from is extremely important in determining its quality;
- 96 percent say that consumers deserve to know that the location where wine grapes are grown is accurately stated on wine labels; and
- 98 percent support establishing worldwide standards for all winemakers that would require that they accurately state the location where wine grapes are grown on wine labels.

“In over 20 years of polling, rarely have we seen such strong feelings on an issue like this,” said Rob Autry, partner of Public Opinion Strategies and the lead pollster on this project. “Consumer sentiment this strong is a clear signal that Americans care a great deal about the location a wine comes from and clearly want ready access to that information when looking at a bottle.”

Perhaps most troubling was the fact that despite broad interest in wine location from all sectors of the U.S. wine-consuming populace, when presented with two labels to compare side by side, most consumers were unable to determine the correct origin of the wine. This underscores the challenges winemakers face with current labeling laws.

The poll was released by the signatories to the Joint Declaration to Protect Wine Place & Origin, a coalition first formed in 2005 when the initial global declaration was signed. The organization has since doubled in size, welcoming its two newest members – Rioja and Long Island – at this year’s meeting in New York.

“Protecting place names are paramount to the consumers who should have the right to know where their wine originates, and the winemakers who deserve to present their product to the market in the most accurate way possible,” said Robin Pollard, executive director of the Washington Wine Commission. “Together, regions such as Western Australia, Tokaj, Washington and many more are ensuring that quality and integrity are all a part of the wine making process.”

“A wine's place of origin is one of its most defining characteristics,” said Duane Wollmuth, executive director of the Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance. “As one of the first federally-recognized AVAs in the United States, we join with these esteemed regions who understand the complexity in every bottle of wine produced. We call on other wine regions around the world to join with our U.S. partners including Washington, Sonoma, Napa Valley, Paso Robles, Long Island and Oregon in our efforts.”

In addition to the growing number of wine regions joining the campaign to protect place names, some of the world's preeminent names in food and wine have joined hands with the coalition as well. An open letter was released today signed by chefs and sommeliers lending their support for truth in wine labeling. Signatories include Thomas Keller from Per Se and the French Laundry; Ferran Adrià from El Bulli; Daniel Boulud from Daniel; Alexandre Ferrand from Alain Ducasse; Wolfgang Puck from Wolfgang Puck Restaurants; Antoine Hernandez from Joël Robuchon; Michel Richard from Citronelle; José Andrés from Jaleo and minibar; Pontus Elofsson from Noma; Charlie Palmer from Charlie Palmer Restaurants and many others from around the globe.

“We support the Joint Declaration to Protect Wine Place & Origin because place names are central to understanding the foods and wines we work with every day,” says José Andrés, a James Beard Award-winning chef with restaurants in Washington, D.C.; Las Vegas and Los Angeles. “We celebrate foods and wines from all over the world every day, because they bring special elements to the table and we believe that clear labeling is central to this experience.”

“Americans care about where their food and wine are from more than ever before, so we must stand together to ensure that consumers accurately receive the location-driven products they desire,” says Chef Ken Frank of Napa Valley's landmark restaurant, La Toque.

The coalition hopes that the clear and resounding results of consumer survey data, combined with the accelerated interest on the part of chefs and other food and wine experts and an overwhelming majority of the world's leading wine regions now working in unison will push lawmakers and others around the globe to better protect wine place names in the U.S. and beyond.

By signing the Declaration, Washington, Walla Walla Valley and the other 13 wine regions have collectively affirmed that geographic names are fundamental tools for consumers to identify the wines from specific wine-growing areas. In their meetings today in New York, the regions renewed their commitment to working together on the consumer education and public advocacy necessary to ensure that these names are protected and respected worldwide.

*The Joint Declaration to Protect Wine Place & Origin was originally signed on July 26, 2005, and now has the support of 15 international wine regions including Champagne, France; Chianti Classico, Italy; Jerez, Spain; Long Island, New York; Napa Valley, California; Oregon state; Paso Robles, California; Porto, Portugal; Rioja, Spain; Sonoma County, California; Tokaj, Hungary; Victoria, Australia; Walla Walla Valley, Washington; Washington state; and Western Australia. These quality wine regions have come together to foster the growing global recognition that location is the most important ingredient in wine. To lend support and read the full text of the Declaration, visit [www.protectplace.com](http://www.protectplace.com).*