



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Season of the Olive Arrives in the Sonoma Valley

Three-Month Celebration of All Things Olive Returns to Sonoma for its Twelfth Year

SONOMA, Calif. (September 26, 2012) – The twelfth annual Sonoma Valley Olive Season, a celebration of the olive harvest and an agricultural and epicurean showcase, will take place December 2012 through February 2013. Encompassing a range of exceptional events, culinary thrills and Valley-wide promotions – from the *Blessing of the Olives* ceremony to an elegant *Feast of the Olive Dinner* – the upcoming Season of the Olive promises to transform the winter months in Sonoma into a celebration of the senses.

Commencing on Saturday, December 1, the kick off of the olive season begins with the traditional *Blessing of the Olives* ceremony, set within the historic Mission San Francisco Solano. Following the initial weekend, key events and promotions are planned Valley-wide in honor of the three-month celebration. In addition, local restaurants and lodging properties will offer olive season packages and promotions, including exclusive olive-inspired menu items and spa treatments throughout the winter months. Throughout the Season of the Olive, visitors will have the opportunity to roll up their sleeves for an olive curing workshop, attend festive events such as the annual Martini Madness competition, and enjoy an array of activities from olive oil tastings and art exhibits to live music, family activities and food and wine pairings. A complete list of events and promotions can be found at www.olivefestival.com.

Season of the Olive favorites slated to return this season include the highly-anticipated *Feast of the Olive Dinner* on January 26, 2013 at Ramekins Culinary School. This multi-course, olive-inspired ceremonial dinner prepared by Sonoma Valley's finest chefs, is one of the Season's

anchor events and is a food-lover's paradise. Preceding Feast of the Olive, master bartenders and chefs will gather to compete for the best martini at the wildly popular *Martini Madness*, where patrons can sample each concoction and place their votes (January 11, 5-7 p.m., location TBD). Then, from February 15-18, the Season of the Olive will culminate with the *Olive Season Finale Weekend*, a magnificent celebration of events, dinners and tastings, including *VinOlivo*, an evening epicurean showcase that includes live entertainment and a Sonoma Valley Marketplace; and *Olive Odyssey*, a two-day affair held at Jacuzzi Family Vineyards, where olive expert Don Landis and olive curers from all over California convene to offer samples, recipes, lessons and delicious olive-themed food and wine pairings. The Season of the Olive's Finale Weekend is a guarantee to impress even the impossible-to-please foodie.

For a comprehensive calendar of Season of the Olive events, please visit the official website at www.olivefestival.com.

About The Sonoma Valley Olive Season

The Sonoma Valley Olive Season, currently in its twelfth year, is a celebration of the senses. Taking place December through February, the Olive Season brings special events to the Sonoma Valley, as well as a range of festival promotions with local lodging, spas, wineries, restaurants and retail shops. For additional information on the Sonoma Valley Olive Season including event specifics and information on sponsors and participants, please contact the Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau at (707) 996-1090, or visit www.olivefestival.com.

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