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## PRESS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

# Renowned Wine Importer Martine Saunier sells Martine's Wines, Inc. to new owners, Gregory Castells and Kate Laughlin

**Novato, CA** - Martine Saunier is pleased to announce that on December 21st, 33 years after founding Martine's Wines, Inc., the celebrated wine importer and wholesaler has come under a new generation of ownership.

The new company will continue doing business as Martine's Wines, and Ms. Saunier will remain on board with the new owners—Gregory Castells and Kate Laughlin—to ensure that the valued relationships forged over so many years will remain intact through the transition and beyond.

Ms. Saunier started her business in 1979 because she couldn't find anything exceptional to drink. In so doing, she became the first woman to import wines into the United States. Ms. Saunier is known to oenophiles everywhere as the woman who discovered Henri Jayet, Château Rayas and Denis Mortet, and is credited for introducing Domaine Leroy and Domaine Perrot-Minot to the United States market.

Now, Mr. Castells and Ms. Laughlin hope to continue Ms. Saunier's remarkable run in selecting, promoting and elevating winemakers to superstars of the wine world. The portfolio will continue to cater to the sommeliers, restaurants, retailers and collectors across the country who value these unique wines and their producers as Ms. Saunier has done for decades. It is for these reasons that many top winemakers in Burgundy, the Rhône and Loire Valleys, among other regions, seek the Martine's seal of approval as the preferred pedigree with which to enter the United States market.

In addition to helping Mr. Castells and Ms. Laughlin ease into her shoes, Ms. Saunier will continue co-producing two more documentaries to follow on the coattails of her soon-to-be released film, "A Year in Burgundy," which tracks several of her star producers through a year in the life cycle of their vineyards. The next films will similarly feature the wines and producers of Champagne and Portugal over the next two years.

The seed for the succession of ownership was planted with Mr. Castells over a dinner at Ms. Saunier's home. She felt that Mr. Castells knew the wines, she trusted him implicitly, and he was French. For his part, since moving to the United States 11 years ago, Mr. Castells has been a buyer and enthusiast of Martine's portfolio and relished the opportunity to take over such a storied enterprise.

A native of Provence, Mr. Castells graduated from Escoffier Restaurant Management School and Tain L'Hermitage Sommelier School. Over the course of his career, Mr. Castells developed wine programs at several Michelin-starred restaurants such as La Palme D'Or and Le Juana on the French Riviera, Restaurant Gordon Ramsay and Petrus in London, Le Bec Fin in Philadelphia, Restaurant Bastide in Los Angeles, and finally at the French Laundry where he was Head Sommelier. Most recently Mr. Castells was the Wine Director for the Napa-based fine wine retailer, Soutirage.

After climbing up the ladder on Madison Avenue, Ms. Laughlin was lured away from the world of advertising by the Thomas Keller Restaurant Group, where she's spent the last seven years working in operations, starting at Per Se in New York and then at the French Laundry executive offices in Yountville, California. It was there where she first worked with Mr. Castells and their executive team. Ms. Laughlin followed Castells to Soutirage in 2009 where they forged their partnership.

Mr. Castells and Ms. Laughlin are excited to bring new opportunities, their unique skill set and experiences to the company while continuing to honor Ms. Saunier's long-standing relationships. "Martine has spent the last 33 years cultivating an outstanding portfolio, staff and distribution network," said Mr. Castells. "Our goal is to preserve and further that legacy."

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