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Photos available upon request

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**RHONE RANGERS TO HONOR RANDALL GRAHM
WITH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

Award to be given March 22nd at annual winemaker dinner celebration in San Francisco

San Francisco, CA – For the first time in its history, the Rhone Rangers organization will recognize the significant contributions made by an individual to the American Rhone wine movement, and will create a new award in his name. This Lifetime Achievement Award will be given to Bonny Doon Vineyard founder and maverick Randall Graham.

Dubbed *The Rhône Ranger* by Wine Spectator magazine in October 1989, Graham produced his first vintage of flagship Le Cigare Volant in 1984, an *homage* to the principal grapes of Châteauneuf-du-Pape grown in California conditions. The Grenache, Mourvèdre and Syrah grapes for this inaugural vintage were sourced from Gilroy, San Martin, and the Estrella River Vineyard in Paso Robles.

Asked about this first vintage, Graham commented, “It was a different day in California, Rhône varieties weren’t exactly easy to come by and no one really knew what they were all about.” He joked, “Could Grenache actually produce a red wine? Syrah was grown in someplace called “Côte-Rôtie. That had to be blazing hot.”

An iconoclastic marketer, Randall Graham has introduced Rhône-style wines to the American public for three decades through proprietary labels such as Le Sophiste, Old Telegram, Clos de Gilroy and My Favorite Marsanne. Bonny Doon Vineyard recently celebrated the 25th anniversary release of Le Cigare Volant.

The Randall Graham Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented on Friday, March 22nd at the Rhone Rangers Annual Winemaker Dinner to be held at the General’s Residence on San Francisco’s Fort Mason. Tickets are \$150 each and may be purchased online at www.rhonerangers.org. For further information please call 800 467-0163.

About the Rhone Rangers

The Rhone Rangers are a group of roughly 150 wineries dedicated to making wines from the 22 grape varieties originally made famous in France’s Rhone Valley. These varieties range from the better-known Syrah and Viognier to the up-and-coming Mourvèdre, Grenache and Roussanne, to obscure (but delicious) grapes like Counoise and Picpoul.

The Rhone Rangers started from a small gathering of American vintners who began meeting informally in the 1980s. As their numbers expanded, the group organized under the name “Rhone Rangers.” The Rhone Rangers is a non-profit organization focused on promoting the enjoyment of Rhone varietal wines produced in the United States. These grapes include the 22 traditional varieties approved by the French government for the Côtes du Rhone, as well as Durif (Petite Sirah). In order for a winery to join the Rhone Rangers, they must produce at least one wine that contains 75% of any single approved varietal (or combination of these varieties). For more information, please visit www.rhonerangers.org.