

1280 PEACHTREE STREET, N.E. • ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30309

Press Office

TEL 404-733-4437

FAX 404-733-4529

prinfo@woodruffcenter.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**WINE AUCTION NAMES 2009 SPECIAL GUESTS**

*Winemakers Louis-Fabrice Latour and Beth Nickel;  
Wine Merchants Sergio Esposito and Martine Saunier;  
Special Guest Chefs Linton Hopkins, Scott Boswell, Sean Brock and Sam Mason*

**ATLANTA, January 21, 2009** – The High Museum Atlanta Wine Auction has named its Special Guests for 2009: Louis-Fabrice Latour of Maison Louis Latour; Beth Nickel of Far Niente, Dolce and Nickel & Nickel; Sergio Esposito of Italian Wine Merchants; and Martine Saunier of Martine's Wines Inc. The 2009 Friend-in-wine is Steve Reynolds, owner of Reynolds Family Winery. Special guest chefs for the Gala Dinner include lead special guest chef Linton Hopkins of Atlanta's Restaurant Eugene and Holeman & Finch Public House; Chef Scott Boswell of New Orleans's Stella! and Stanley; Chef Sean Brock of Charleston's McCrady's; Chef Sam Mason of New York's Tailor; and the coordinating chef Lincoln Stevens of A Legendary Event. The 17<sup>th</sup> annual auction, "The Genius Inside: Wine + Food + Art," is scheduled for March 25–28.

"We expect our seventeenth year to be a year of pure genius," says Elizabeth Harris, Wine Auction Manager. "We credit strong relationships and good Southern hospitality with our success in continuing to draw prominent vintners, chefs and donors to our event. We look forward to another successful auction in support of the High's exhibitions, educational programs and acquisitions."

Special Guest Maison Louis Latour is the oldest remaining, family-run winegrower/merchant in Burgundy, France. In 1999 the sixth Louis Latour passed the running of the business into the hands of his son, Louis-Fabrice, who has introduced new managerial skills and ideas for the winery. He is a strong advocate of the family philosophy of integrating modern innovations with the best of established traditions. For the last decade, Maison Louis Latour has been the unofficial champion of environmental care in Burgundy since joining Forum de l'Agriculture Raisonnée Respectueuse de l'Environnement in 1998. In its pursuit of sound agricultural practices, the company was awarded high performance levels for environmental standards by the International Organization for Standardization in March 2003. The Latours are innovators and are continually involved in research and development. Maison Louis Latour is the pioneer of varietal wines from France with its Chardonnay (produced in the Ardeche) and Pinot Noir (produced in the Var). Development is underway for of a new blended white wine from the Chardonnay and Viognier varieties. Maison Latour Winery has been named one of *Wine Spectator's* "Top 10 of 2008" and one of *Wine Enthusiast's* "Top 100 Cellar Selections of 2008."

Beth Nickel, proprietress of Far Niente, Dolce, and Nickel & Nickel, is also involved in the three wineries' marketing and public relations programs, interiors, and landscape design projects. Raised in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, Nickel grew up in the nursery industry. Through her father, a forester and nurseryman, she met Gil Nickel, a fellow Oklahoman who was involved in his family's nursery business. The Nickel family still owns Greenleaf Nursery, the second largest family-owned

wholesale nursery in the U.S. Although Far Niente was founded in 1885, the winery's modern era dates from 1979, when Gil and Beth rescued the long-abandoned stone winery in Oakville and began restoration of the historic estate. It was their dream to establish a "Napa Valley Wine Estate" that would share the stage with the great wine estates of the world, and gain a reputation for excellence that would reach far beyond the borders of the Napa Valley.

Sergio Esposito is a director of Italian Wine Merchants. With more than 20 years of experience, he is recognized by industry insiders as the premier Italian wine consultant in the United States. Esposito founded Italian Wine Merchants in New York City in 1999 and is one of the directors of Italian Wine Merchant Holdings. He continues to raise the profile of Italian wine in the U.S. and influences both colleagues and collectors with cutting-edge selections and services. Esposito is the author of "Passion on the Vine: A Memoir of Food, Wine and Family in the Heart of Italy," and spends three months a year in Italy, where he meets with producers, tastes new vintages and brokers the sale of wine. He also travels throughout the U.S. giving lectures and presenting wine tastings.

A Paris native, Martine Saunier of Martine's Wines, Inc., came to California in 1964 and is the first woman to found a U.S. wine importing company. After meeting Napa Valley wine pioneer Andre Tchelistcheff, who told her the only good Pinot Noir was back in Burgundy, Saunier began fondly recalling the wines from home. In 1969 she began importing French wine and quickly gained a following across California for her exquisite selections. A decade later in 1979, with prodding from Jean Bertranou of L'Ermitage, one of Los Angeles's top chefs, she launched Martine's Wines. Now, more than 30 years later, she manages a portfolio from her Novato warehouse that encompasses the best of Burgundy and the Rhone, along with such esteemed properties as Diebolt-Vallois in Champagne and lesser-known wineries like Château Gilette in Bordeaux.

2009 Friend-in-wine Steve Reynolds grew up in Germany where his father often took his family on wine tasting trips. Reynolds credits these experiences for initiating his passion and enthusiasm for wine. After trading a dental practice to become a vintner in 1994, Reynolds and his wife bought a 100-year-old poultry ranch in California located at the southern tip of the Stags Leap District on the scenic Silverado Trail. The first vintage that was produced was released in 1999. Seven wines are now produced including a Chardonnay, two Pinot Noirs (from the Russian River Valley and Los Carneros), a Merlot, the Estate Cabernet, Reserve Stag's Leap Cabernet Sauvignon and a red wine blend appropriately called "Persistence." Napa's People's Choice voted him "Best Winemaker" three years in a row as well as "Best Boutique Winery" in 2008.

The Auction's four Special Guest Chefs, led by Linton Hopkins, will prepare courses for the official Gala Dinner on Friday, March 28. As one of the nation's leading chefs and owner of Restaurant Eugene, Holeman & Finch Public House and H&F Bread Co., Linton Hopkins has earned a reputation for exciting Southern cuisine combined with the formal French training he received at the Culinary Institute of America (Hyde Park, New York). Hopkins spent his externship at Mr. B's Bistro in New Orleans and worked as a banquet cook and saucier for The Grill Room of the Windsor Court Hotel in New Orleans. He then joined D.C. Coast in Washington, D.C., becoming Chef de Cuisine after four years. In 2004, after years of working and training in world-renowned culinary establishments, Hopkins opened his own restaurant in Atlanta named for his grandfather, Restaurant Eugene. Hopkins has been named "Iron Chef America Atlanta Challenger" by Food Network and one of "5 Chefs to Watch" by *Bon Appétit* magazine. Restaurant Eugene has been recognized in *Bon Appétit*, *Gourmet*, *Wine Spectator*, *Esquire* and *The New York Times*.

Scott Boswell, a Louisiana native and chef/owner of New Orleans's Stella! and Stanley, is known for creating global-modern cuisine influenced by world flavors, as well as his Louisiana roots. Like Hopkins, Boswell is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America and began his career at the Windsor Court Hotel in New Orleans. After graduation he embarked on a culinary tour through Europe and Japan where he perfected his technique and solidified his reverence for sophisticated cuisine. Chef Boswell and Stella! have been recognized as one of the leaders of New Orleans's rebirth as a culinary destination.

Chef Sean Brock of the historic McCrady's Restaurant in Charleston, South Carolina, will also be a part of the Gala Dinner. Chef Brock has created a true field-to-table experience at McCrady's by developing a 2 ½-acre farm on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina. The culinary, service and management teams at McCrady's work this farm together to produce most of the vegetables for the restaurant. Brock has a long list of accomplishments and accolades to his credit including being named the Food Network's "Next Great Chef" in 2008. He has also received numerous lustrous reviews and local awards, and apprenticeships with acclaimed chefs Rick Tramanto, Gale Gand and Grant Achatz in Chicago, and Paco Rancero in Madrid, Spain.

Sam Mason, chef and partner at Tailor in New York City, is known for his amazing culinary vision and talent for combining unusual and innovative ingredients that surprise, delight and challenge the palate. Tailor's restaurant concept is that of "salty" and "sweet" small plates and unconventional takes on classic cocktails. A native of Jacksonville, Florida, Mason was educated at Johnson & Wales University and has honed his craft in some of the most prestigious kitchens in the country, most notably as the pastry chef at the renowned WD-50 on the lower east side of New York City.

Chef Lincoln Stevens of A Legendary Event and his staff will assist all chefs in the creation, preparation and presentation of the Gala Dinner. Executive Chef for A Legendary Event, Stevens oversees more than 1,200 catering events each year.

### **2009 High Museum Atlanta Wine Auction**

The 2009 Wine Auction, organized by co-chairs Crystal Cox and Karen Hughes, includes a Secret Cellars Tour of three treasure troves of wine on March 1. Auction week, March 25–28, begins with Thomas Arvid's Artist Dinner on Wednesday, March 25, and is followed by 15 Winemaker Dinners on Thursday, March 26. Events on Friday, March 27, include a fantastic dinner led by gastronomic genius Chef Linton Hopkins and the Gala Silent Auction, held under festive big-top tents in Atlantic Station, featuring a Champagne de Venoge Reception. Saturday, March 28, features the Vintners' Reception and Live Auction and concludes with The Big Finish, a wine-weekend finale for the Auction's next generation co-sponsored by the Museum's volunteer organization Art Partners. Teaming up to wield the gavel for Saturday's Live Auction are esteemed wine auctioneers Michael Davis and Leah Hammer of Hart Davis Hart Wine Co., Chicago. *For more information about specific events, please visit [www.atlanta-wineauction.org](http://www.atlanta-wineauction.org).*

The 2009 High Museum Atlanta Wine Auction is made possible through the generous support of the exclusive Presenting Sponsor, Turner Broadcasting System, Inc., and the Grand Cru Sponsor, The Streets of Buckhead. Premier Corporate Sponsors include *Atlanta Homes and Lifestyles* magazine, Geographics and Wachovia Wealth Management. Atlantic Station is the Site Sponsor. Delta Air Lines is the official airline sponsor. Select Corporate Sponsors include The Atlantic; Callway Gardens; Four Seasons Hotel, Atlanta; A Legendary Event; Sherlock's Wine Merchant; Tony Brewer & Company; Corporate Environments and Wilmington Trust.

**High Museum Atlanta Wine Auction**

The 2008 High Museum Atlanta Wine Auction set records as the most successful live auction in its 16-year history, bringing in a net profit of more than \$2.1 million, marking only the second time in its history to raise over \$2 million. Last year also marked the Wine Auction's third time in the Atlantic Station neighborhood, the heart of Atlanta's cosmopolitan west side and the city's newest location for community events.

Founded in 1993, the High Museum Atlanta Wine Auction is the largest fundraising event for the High and ranks as the top charity wine auction in the country benefiting the arts, drawing prominent winemakers from the U.S. and around the world. The funds generated by the Wine Auction, which amount to more than \$12 million over the last 15 years and \$2.1 million in 2008 alone, are a significant contribution to the Museum's acquisitions, exhibitions and educational programming.

*For more information about the Wine Auction, please visit [www.atlanta-wineauction.org](http://www.atlanta-wineauction.org).*

**High Museum of Art**

The High Museum of Art, founded in 1905 as the Atlanta Art Association, is the leading art museum in the southeastern United States. With more than 11,000 works of art in its permanent collection, the High Museum of Art has an extensive anthology of 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century American and decorative art; significant holdings of European paintings; a growing collection of African American art; and burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, photography and African art. The High is also dedicated to supporting and collecting works by Southern artists and is distinguished as the only major museum in North America to have a curatorial department specifically devoted to the field of folk and self-taught art. The High's Media Arts department produces acclaimed annual film series and festivals of foreign, independent and classic cinema. In November 2005, the High opened three new buildings by architect Renzo Piano that more than doubled the Museum's size, creating a vibrant "village for the arts" at the Woodruff Arts Center in midtown Atlanta. *For more information about the High, please visit [www.High.org](http://www.High.org).*

**The Woodruff Arts Center**

The Woodruff Arts Center is the largest arts center in the Southeast as well as one of the four largest in the nation. The Woodruff is unique in that it combines five visual and performing arts divisions on one campus as one not-for-profit organization. Founded in 1968, the Woodruff Arts Center is home to the Alliance Theatre, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the High Museum of Art, Young Audiences and the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Playhouse.

###

**Media contact:**

Nicole Johnson

Public Relations Coordinator

Tel: 404-733-4585 | Fax: 404-733-4529

E-mail: [nicole.johnson@woodruffcenter.org](mailto:nicole.johnson@woodruffcenter.org)