



WASHINGTON STATE WINE

**Seattle**  
metronatural™  
Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Washington State Wine Commission and Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Announce New Partnership to Produce Taste Washington**

*Nation's largest single-region wine and food event to grow to two days,  
continue to showcase Washington State wine industry*

**SEATTLE** (November 16, 2011) – The Washington State Wine Commission and Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau (SCVB) today announced the formation of a new partnership to produce Taste Washington, the nation's largest single-region wine and food event held annually in Seattle.

The Commission will license the event to SCVB, and the Commission will become a presenting sponsor. Beginning immediately, SCVB will assume primary responsibility for producing the event, including sponsorship and vendor arrangements, while the Commission will manage winery participation and other wine-related activities.

"Over fourteen years, Taste Washington has grown to become the premier showcase for the Washington State wine industry in the Pacific Northwest," said Kent Waliser, Chairman of the Washington State Wine Commission and General Manager for Sagemoor Vineyards. "This new partnership will enable Taste Washington to continue to grow into a destination wine and food event on a national level," he added.

"Taste Washington has long been a crown jewel of our local community," said Chad Mackay, 2012 Chairman of Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau and President and COO of El Gaucho. "By working with the Commission to produce Taste Washington, SCVB aims to bring visitors from across the country and around the world to Seattle to experience the best of our rich wine and culinary traditions."

The Commission and SCVB also announced changes to the format for Taste Washington.

The Taste Washington Grand Tasting, previously a one-day event, will now expand to two days, Saturday, March 31, 2012, and Sunday, April 1, 2012, at CenturyLink Field Event Center in Seattle. It is hoped that the expanded format will enhance business opportunities for restaurants, hotels, visitor attractions and other businesses.

The Taste Washington Seminars, held previously at Bell Harbor International Conference Center in Seattle, will move to CenturyLink Field Event Center on Saturday, March 31, 2012. Tickets for the Seminars will be sold independently of those for the Grand Tasting.

And for the first time, ticket packages – inclusive of Grand Tasting tickets, Seminar tickets, and lodging – will also be available.

“The new format for Taste Washington will maintain the event’s focus on the Washington State wine industry – a focus that truly sets Taste Washington apart from other wine and food events,” said Robin Pollard, Executive Director for the Washington State Wine Commission. “Our industry will continue to be the star of the show.”

“Taste Washington fits perfectly with SCVB’s core mission – to bring more visitors to Seattle and Washington State,” said Tom Norwalk, SCVB President & CEO. “Our state’s world-class wine is already a tourism driver and we look forward to working hand-in-hand with the wine industry to build on the success of Taste Washington, explore expansion of this event to multiple days or weeks and further showcase Northwest food, restaurants and chefs.”

The licensing agreement for Taste Washington will be ongoing, subject to mutual agreement. Varsity Communications, which has provided event production services for the event for the past five years, will continue in its role.

#### **About Taste Washington:**

Taste Washington is the largest single-region wine and food event in the United States, featuring more than 200 Washington State wineries and over 60 Pacific Northwest restaurants. Held annually in the spring, Taste Washington attracts more than 3,000 wine and food enthusiasts to the Seattle area. The Washington State Wine Commission launched Taste Washington in 1998. For more information on Taste Washington, please visit [www.tastewashington.org](http://www.tastewashington.org).

#### **About the Washington State Wine Commission:**

The Washington State Wine Commission represents every licensed winery and every wine grape grower in Washington State. Guided by an appointed board, the Commission provides a marketing platform to raise positive awareness of the Washington State wine industry and generate greater demand for its wines. Funded almost entirely by the industry – through assessments based on grape and wine sales – the Commission is a state government agency, established by the legislature in 1987. For more information on the Washington State Wine Commission and the Washington State wine industry, please visit [www.washingtonwine.org](http://www.washingtonwine.org).

#### **About Seattle’s Convention and Visitors Bureau:**

Seattle’s Convention and Visitors Bureau, a private, nonprofit marketing organization, has served as Seattle/King County’s official destination marketing organization (DMO) for more than 50 years. The goal of these marketing efforts is to enhance the employment opportunities and economic prosperity of the region.