



Mission Hill Family Estate Celebrates First Decade of the Bells Tower Rings in a Progressive Decade in the Burgeoning Okanagan Valley

West Kelowna, British Columbia (December 1, 2010) – Strike a celebratory note and commemorate the first ten year anniversary of Mission Hill Family Estate's iconic bell tower at the award-winning Okanagan winery. On a clear crisp evening of December 10, 2000, the bells of Mission Hill first rang. Since then, they have been heard world-wide and the Okanagan wine industry has been transformed. Stirring a sense of nostalgia, the peal of bells represents a time and place when people came together to celebrate life's milestones. In that same spirit of coming together - to mark not only ten years of bells, but also the incredible progress of the B.C. wine industry over the past decade - Mission Hill will hold day long festivities on Saturday, December 11.



Standing as a reminder of the Old World craft of winemaking unchanged throughout millennia, the tower is a legacy to the past and a landmark for the future. Handcast at the Paccard bell foundry in Annecy, France - the first for a winery in the world - they have also become an icon for the Valley. Overlooking Okanagan Lake, the 12-storey bell tower pays homage to proprietor Anthony von Mandl's family. Each of the four heavy bronze bells (the largest weighs almost 800 kilos), are dedicated to a member of Anthony's immediate family. The bells also link the Okanagan globally. Among other famous sites Paris's Sacré Coeur church features Paccard bells, as does New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral.

"Thirty years ago a lot of people thought I was crazy when I gave a speech and predicted that B.C. wines could become some of the best in the world. Two decades later, they thought I was crazy because of my bell tower. Now, the bells stand as a monument to the art, timelessness and passion of winemaking and serve as a symbol for the advancement of the Okanagan wine industry," says Anthony von Mandl. "We want to share them with our neighbours, acting as a beacon to welcome generations of visitors to the Valley. This ten-year anniversary is a nostalgic and symbolic time to celebrate the best of this place and its people. We invite people from around the world to discover our Valley, our community and our wines."

"The bell tower was always part of Anthony's vision. A lofty 130 feet in the air, it is the focal point of the courtyard and is the winery's most predominant design element," said architect Tom Kundig. "The common goal was to make the winery into something that would be deeply memorable for all visitors. I believe that Anthony and I saw it as a place that weaves the beautiful natural landscape of the Okanagan with the cultural landscape of the winery and its story, in a meaningful, even transcendent way."

Show Up With Bells On

On Saturday, December 11, Mission Hill welcomes revelers to partake in family-friendly celebrations from 11 am to 6 pm, with the day's highlight a special commemorative ceremony at 3 pm with proprietor Anthony von Mandl and the Alleluia Handbell Ringers. Winter attire recommended.

- Vertical Icewine tastings 11 am to 3 pm
- Pastry & Cookie Decorating with Chef Matthew Batey 12 to 1 pm
- Bottle Signing by Chief Winemaker John Simes 12 to 2 pm
- Icewine & Architecture Tours 11 am to 2 pm
- Celebratory Presentation with Proprietor Anthony von Mandl 3 to 3:30 pm

- Carolers and Live Ice Carving 1:30 to 3 pm
- Wine Shop Cellar Door Exclusives 11 am to 6 pm

A Valley Transformed

There is something magical about Okanagan wines and our region, which is among the most beautiful agritourism destinations in the world. The growth in bed and breakfasts, creation of a distinctive regional cuisine, organic farms, and fromageries has attracted visitors from the world over. Since the late 1980s and the evolution to classic vinifera based wines, B.C. has been winning trophies at major international wine competitions, with seasoned, innovative winemakers moving to the Valley from around the world to help forge our new region. The number of acres planted has increased dramatically over that time, which when Mission Hill was founded in 1981, had only six wineries, today there are almost 200. And it seems that for every time the bell rang at Mission Hill over the past decade, another vineyard and person to enjoy the harvest from those vineyards sprang up in the Okanagan. The statistics bears this out:

Population of the Regional District of Central Okanagan

2000: 152,060

2009: 184,037

Harvest

2000: 10,022 tonnes

2010: 20,000 tonnes (estimate)

BC VQA wine sales

1999/2000: \$48.7 million

2009/2010: \$182 million

BC wineries

2000: 60

2010: 189

(Statistics supplied by the BC Wine Institute and the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission.)

- 30 -

About Mission Hill Family Estate

Mission Hill Family Estate is world renowned for its award-winning wines, stunning setting and architecture, and its Cuisine du Terroir-based Terrace Restaurant. The winery's vineyards are located in five distinct growing regions of British Columbia's Okanagan Valley. Reflective of the origin and unique character of the Valley and of the careful 'Vine to Bottle' program, Oculus, our signature Bordeaux-inspired wine, represents the pinnacle in premium winemaking. Proprietor Anthony von Mandl and winemaker John Simes produce elegant internationally acclaimed wines with New World flavours and Old World refinement from this incomparable wine valley. Visit www.missionhillwinery.com for more information.

Media Contact:

Lori Raffan

Director of Public Relations, Mission Hill Family Estate

T: 604.808.6655 / E: lraffan@missionhillwinery.com

Additional images and interviews available upon request.