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New Wine Production Technique Earns 'Double Gold' for DH Lescombes Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

(DEMING. NM) — New Mexico wines continue to make an impression on the international wine-making community based on the recent San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition. Among its ten awards at the competition, Southwest Wines' DH Lescombes New Mexico grown 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon was awarded a prestigious 'Double Gold', reflecting the unanimous opinion of the judges. From the production of the grapes to the final stage in the bottle, this particular vintage was produced using a new winemaking technique called micro-oxygenation that replaces traditional barrel-aging techniques. Developed in Southern France, this relatively new technique is widely employed today in the Bordeaux region.

Wines aged in wood barrels are generally produced in three different toast levels; light, medium and heavy. Micro-oxygenation replicates the aging in barrels with aging in a tank. With barrels, the wine receives oxygen along with all the qualities from the wood of the barrel. In micro-oxygenation, oak chips are incorporated in the wine tank and the oxygen is injected through a porous ceramic stone into the wine with a computer meter.

In production of the 2007 DH Lescombes Cabernet Sauvignon, seven different varieties of French oak chips, toasted at different levels, were used. The degree of toast provides very specific spices and flavor to the wood chips and to the wine after aging. The blending of these different oak chips with the wine and the use of the micro-oxygenation technique for 18 months is reflected in the complexity and unique character of this Cabernet Sauvignon as opposed to results from aging in barrels.

Southwest Wine’s winemaker, Philippe Littot, had the ambition and the passion to improve the quality of the wine, but was very cautious about replacing the aging of red wine in barrels with the new technique, micro-oxygenation. His careful implementation of this technique has proven to be extremely successful.

Upon receiving the Double Gold medal, Littot feels that micro-oxygenation can open the doors to a multitude of advantages and diversity in wine aging technology. “I am very excited by the intensity and the diversity of aromas that make this wine so appealing," he said. "Our first micro-oxygenation was a success and I believe that in the future this technique will give me the opportunity to produce a variety of wines with more complexity.”