



Vancouver, January 18, 2012

### **Canada-Australia collaboration to reveal Chardonnay's secrets**

The University of British Columbia's (UBC) Wine Research Centre and The Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI) have announced they have received \$585,000 to produce the first assembled genomic sequence of the Chardonnay grape.

Although Chardonnay is one of the most abundant white wine grape varieties in the world – it is the dominant white variety in Australia and the second most planted white variety in British Columbia – very little is currently known about the Chardonnay genome. “Chardonnay is planted in more countries than any other variety, white or red, and is considered to be the principal international white wine standard,” said Dr Hennie van Vuuren, Director, UBC Wine Research Centre. “The collaborative project will be examining 15 different clones of the Chardonnay varietal, each with distinct properties such as early or late ripening, loose or small bunch sizes, seedless or large berries, etc. Many wineries do not know which type they have planted, and this project will help us to identify the type for the winery. This information will also allow growers to plant the most appropriate type for their climate, leading to improved quality of wine and improved vineyard productivity.”

The AWRI's Managing Director, Dr Dan Johnson, said, “The AWRI is delighted to have secured this partnership for the benefit of Australian grape and wine producers. Chardonnay is a key varietal for Australia and the subject of a large number of ongoing R&D projects; assembly of the Chardonnay genome will produce a foundational data resource that will underpin many such projects and, with time, will assist in developing practical game changing strategies for the growing of this variety. Our work will benefit from the development of linkages with other groups working on grapevine sequencing initiatives for other varieties. The AWRI has great respect for the team at UBC and look forward to undertaking this significant project with them and, potentially, with our collaborators in the Adelaide-based Wine Innovation Cluster.”

The project will be conducted by a strong, multi-disciplinary team led by Drs Hennie van Vuuren and Joerg Bohlmann (UBC Wine Research Centre/UBC Michael Smith Laboratories), Professor Sakkie Pretorius (University of South Australia) and Dr Dan Johnson (The Australian Wine Research Institute), with input from the Canadian and Australian wine industries. This grant is funded by Genome British Columbia, The University of British Columbia, The UBC Wine Research Centre, Bioplatforms Australia Ltd and The Australian Wine Research Institute.

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