



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
March 17, 2005**

**Contact: Sandy Kurbis
Tel: 416.398.3335 ext 2
sandy@forefrontcom.com**

ONTARIO WINE AWARDS CELEBRATES ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY WITH RECORD NUMBER OF ENTRIES

TORONTO - The 2005 Ontario Wine Awards are fast approaching and so begins the process of choosing the best of this year's entries. The response to the 10th anniversary of this prestigious annual competition for VQA wines has been so overwhelming that the organizers have had to split the judging into two day-long sessions with a special tasting of Ontario Icewines to be judged by eight of Toronto's top sommeliers.

On **Saturday, March 26th** and **Saturday, April 2nd** at Crush Wine Bar & Restaurant, the first step in this process will be set in motion - the judging. Each entry is assessed blind by panels of accredited wine professionals - journalists, LCBO personnel and sommeliers. The criteria for judging the entries not only involve having an appreciation for wine, but also include a knowledge of wines from the Ontario's four growing regions. Included amongst the gold medal opportunities are Ontario Wine of the Year, Ontario Winemaker of the Year and the Ontario Journalism Award, which recognizes the best article published in 2004 on the Ontario wine industry. On **Sunday, April 10th**, two panels of sommeliers will assess and rank over 60 Ontario Icewines at The Tasting Rooms Restaurant in Toronto.

The Ontario Wine Awards were founded in 1995 by Tony Aspler; one of Canada's most acclaimed wine writers. His vision was to catapult Ontario VQA wines into the most successful, most revered wines available to domestic and foreign markets by recognizing and promoting the top Ontario wineries for the quality product they produce. "Our mission is to provide recognition for outstanding Ontario wines and to the men and women who are dedicated to producing a superior product," explains Tony Aspler. "These awards enhance the profile of Ontario wines in the world market, opening doors to new opportunities for Ontario wineries."

On **Friday, April 29th**, the awards will be presented to the winning winemakers at the Awards Gala Dinner held at Queen's Landing in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The public will be able to savour and explore the winning wines at the Consumer Event being held in Toronto's Distillery District on **Thursday, June 16th**.

More exciting details on the Awards Gala Dinner and Toronto Consumer Event will be announced as the dates approach and will be made available at www.ontariowineawards.ca.

ONTARIO WINE AWARDS CELEBRATES ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY WITH RECORD NUMBER OF ENTRIES

Key sponsors for this event include; Advantex Marketing International Inc., All Stick Label Design, Blair Franklin Capital Partners Inc., Crush Wine Bar & Restaurant, Dairy Farmers of Canada, Evian, **Fine Wine Reserve Wine Storage**, Grape and Wine Festival, Grape Growers of Ontario, Higgins Party Rentals, LCBO, Meridian Credit Union, Mont Blanc Boutique Toronto, Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation, Ontario Wine Society, Riedel Crystal, The Ideal Printing Company Limited, The Wine Council of Ontario, The Wine Establishment, VIA Rail Canada, Vintage Inns, Vintages, Wine Access

For more information on the judging and tickets for the Awards Gala Dinner or the Consumer Event, please contact Sandy Kurbis, Forefront Communications, at 416-398-3335 Ext. 2, or Tony Aspler at 416-488-8597.

About Tony Aspler

Tony Aspler has been active in the international wine world since 1964. He received his basic wine education in London, England at Grant's of St. James' Wine School. As a consultant and wine judge, he makes frequent trips to the vineyards and wine fairs of Europe and the new world and is recognized as the leading authority on Canadian wines.

Tony wrote for The Toronto Star for 21 years and is now concentrating on writing for various magazines and is the author of nine novels. He is also the co-founder of the charitable foundation Grapes for Humanity - www.grapesforhumanity.com. Tony may be reached at tony.aspler@sympatico.ca, or visit www.tonyaspler.com for further information.

About The Forefront Communications Network Inc.

Forefront Communications is an acknowledged full-service marketing and communications company dealing exclusively in the alcohol beverage industry. Established in 1979, Forefront has excelled within the industry by offering its clients superior expertise in; strategic planning, creative development, promotion, media planning and placement as well as POS and exhibit design.

By developing successful marketing programs for many domestic and international clients, Forefront's proven track record has earned them the reputation of being one of Canada's premier advertising agencies in the alcohol beverage industry.