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J. LOHR RED WINEMAKER STEVE PECK NAMED ‘WINEMAKER OF THE YEAR’ BY THE SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY WINE INDUSTRY

San Jose, Calif. – July 12, 2016 – J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines announced today that Red Winemaker Steve Peck has been named ‘Winemaker of the Year’ by the San Luis Obispo County wine industry. Peck was nominated for ‘Winemaker of the Year’ by an esteemed group of industry associations that includes the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance, the San Luis Obispo Wine Country Association, the Independent Grape Growers of the Paso Robles Area and The Vineyard Team. After being nominated, Peck was voted the ‘Winemaker of the Year’ honor by his industry peers in recognition of his leadership and accomplishments on behalf of San Luis Obispo County winemaking. San Luis Obispo County is California’s third largest wine region, and the home to J. Lohr’s sustainably-certified vineyards and winery in Paso Robles.

As the red winemaker for family-owned J. Lohr for the past decade, Peck leverages his passion for viticulture and his comprehensive technical knowledge to lead J. Lohr’s red wine program. This program includes more than 2,600 acres of red varieties, primarily focused on Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Petite Sirah in Paso Robles, and more than 140 acres of Pinot Noir in the Santa Lucia Highlands and Arroyo Seco appellations of Monterey County. With an academic focus on chemical engineering and fermentation sciences, Steve put himself through UC Davis as part of the team at Joseph Phelps Vineyards, before pursuing opportunities in the biotech industry. Inspired by an early mentorship making homemade wines with his uncle, Peck dedicated himself to learning the art of winemaking on his own time. In 2001, his love of winemaking brought him back to the industry full-time as winemaker for Five Rivers Winery, and in 2004, he also became responsible for the red wines at Jekel Vineyards. In 2007, Peck was named red winemaker for J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines, and from 2007 through 2015, he sat on the

board of the Central Coast Vineyard Team, serving as board president for the last four years.

“Steve’s deep knowledge of Paso Robles’ growing conditions and soils, regard for the nuance of winemaking craft, and unrelenting pursuit of true varietal characteristic in our red wines has garnered him great respect within J. Lohr and across the wine industry,” said Director of Winemaking, President/COO Jeff Meier, who has been with J. Lohr for 33 years. “Everything we do at J. Lohr yields a continual focus on improvement and quality, and the wines in our portfolio demonstrate Steve’s acumen and passion at its best. He is indeed a deserving recipient for recognition by the San Luis Obispo County wine industry.”

As part of an acclaimed winemaking team that includes Winemaker, White Wine, Kristen Barnhisel, and Assistant Winemaker Brenden Wood, Peck is widely recognized for helping to make some of the finest wines in J. Lohr’s history, with his influence shaping all of the red wines in four J. Lohr signature tiers. These tiers include J. Lohr Estates, J. Lohr Vineyard Series, J. Lohr Cuvée Series, and the limited-release wines of J. Lohr *Gesture*, Rhône varieties and blends that have fueled growth of the Lohr wine club since their release in 2009. Recent high praise for J. Lohr red wines include Double Gold Medal/Best of Class of Region, 98 points, for each of the 2012 J. Lohr Cuvée St. E, 2014 J. Lohr *Gesture* Mourvèdre, and the 2013 J. Lohr Tower Road Petite Sirah, all awarded by the 2016 California State Fair; the Chairman’s Trophy and 97 and 96 points respectively for the 2012 J. Lohr Cuvée PAU and the 2013 J. Lohr Tower Road Petite Sirah, awarded by the 2016 Ultimate Beverage Challenge; and countless Double Gold, Gold and Best of Class/Best of Region for the 2013 J. Lohr *Gesture* Syrah. Steve was especially pleased to see the 2014 J. Lohr *Gesture* Syrah awarded Best of Class at the Mid-State Fair’s 2016 Central Coast Wine Competition.

Now in its 18th year, the 2016 San Luis Obispo County Wine Industry Awards event will be held on Friday, July 22 at the Mid-State Fair in Paso Robles, California, where Peck will be honored alongside fellow award recipients, including Wine Industry Person of the Year, Jean-Pierre Wolff, and Winegrape Grower of the Year, Bob Thomas. The event begins at

5:30 p.m. within the Mission Square, and is free to the public with paid admission to the Fair. Previous J. Lohr award recipients include J. Lohr Vineyard Manager Steve Carter, who was named 2003 Winegrape Grower of the Year, and J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines Founder Jerry Lohr, who was honored as the 2008 Wine Industry Person of the Year. Visit www.midstatefair.com for more information.

About J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines

Founded four decades ago by Jerry Lohr, and still family-owned and operated today, J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines crafts a full line of internationally recognized wines from more than 5,000 acres of sustainably-farmed, estate vineyards in Paso Robles, Monterey County's Arroyo Seco and Santa Lucia Highlands appellations, and St. Helena in the Napa Valley. Offering an expressive range of styles, J. Lohr produces four tiers of signature wines showcasing its estate grapes – *J. Lohr Estates*, *J. Lohr Vineyard Series*, *J. Lohr Cuvée Series* and *J. Lohr Gesture*.

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