



For Immediate Release
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**MARILYN MONROE LIVES AGAIN
2003 Merlot incarnation is the 19th**

Napa CA June 2005 – Longevity, success *and* sex in the wine business? The answer is yes and the wine is Marilyn Merlot. For the past twenty years each year on June 1 – Marilyn Monroe’s birthday – Marilyn Wines has released another vintage of Marilyn Merlot. Each year’s label is a different photograph of the Hollywood legend. Marilyn Merlot has established itself as a wine industry legend, with collectors eagerly snapping up each year’s release as the wines appreciate in value more quickly than first growth Bordeaux and other prized and collectible wines.

The 2003 Marilyn Merlot has just been released (Marilyn Monroe would have been 79 this month). The wine is in wide national distribution and is also available at MarilynWines.com. The suggested national retail price is \$24.50 (750 ml). Winemaker John McKay blended 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon – all from the Napa Valley appellation – and the wine was barrel-aged in 30% new oak before bottling. The photo on the label for this wine was taken by Sam Shaw in 1957.

Winemaker McKay describes the wine: “A substantial addition of Cabernet adds great complexity to the nose and more structure to the mouth. The wine’s time in barrel enhances the aromas of vanilla and roasted coffee. The fruity aromas and flavors are ripe and soft, reflecting the maturity and quality of the grapes we harvested. All the vineyards for this wine are located in the heart of the Napa Valley ranging from the Oak Knoll District to the Rutherford District.”

Today the family of Marilyn Wines includes Marilyn Cabernet and Norma Jeane, a young Merlot, as well as Marilyn Merlot. In September, the newest vintage arrives – the 2003 Velvet Collection. The Velvet Collection sets wine industry precedents on many fronts: the label is the first to use “peel and peek,” with a clear overlay with iridescent sparkles which peels away to reveal a nude

photograph of Marilyn Monroe reclining on red velvet. Taken by Tom Kelley in 1949, this photograph became the first Centerfold in the inaugural issue of *Playboy Magazine* – another first. The 2003 Velvet Collection will be available in two formats – as a 1.5 liter magnum in a dramatic presentation box (\$225) or as a 3-bottle set in an elegant wooden display box (containing a standard 750 ml bottle, a 1.5L magnum, and 3L double magnum, \$1,000). Susann Ortega is the label and package designer.

The first release of Marilyn Merlot was the 1985 vintage (released in 1987). The idea for a line of wines glorifying Marilyn Monroe began at a dinner party in the Napa Valley in 1983 at the home of Robert and Donna Holder. The uniqueness of a family of wines honoring the greatest icon of sensuality of the twentieth century includes an extensive philanthropic aspect. Marilyn Wines has an exclusive agreement with Marilyn's estate for the use of her name and her image: no other wines or products have this distinction, and accordingly, royalties are distributed to The Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute in New York and Los Angeles and to the Anna Freud Centre in London, as Marilyn directed in her will.

"We may be the first wine brand to combine a popular celebrity's image with philanthropic cause marketing, not to mention an extremely elegant bottle of Napa Valley wine," explains Robert Holder. In fact, collectors have made Marilyn Merlot one of the fastest-appreciating wines on the market, as twelve-bottle sets of the 1985 through 1996 vintages continue to grow in value and sell for as much as \$7,500.

Currently available are: 2000 Marilyn Cabernet (Napa Valley appellation, \$38), 2004 Norma Jeane, a young Merlot (\$10.50), and the 2002 Velvet Collection (Napa Valley appellation – 1.5L presentation box, \$225, or 3-bottle [750, 1.5, 3L] set in wooden box, \$1,000).

Purchasing info: MarilynWines.com, 707/963-5475 or 866/MMWINES

Downloadable images: <http://www.marilynwines.com/private/trade.html>

Username: marilyn

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