



## Mission Hill Family Estate Celebrates Ten Years of Oculus Signature Wine Festivities Commemorate 10<sup>th</sup> Vintage

West Kelowna, British Columbia (September 22, 2010) – This autumn Mission Hill Family Estate celebrates the tenth vintage of its signature internationally acclaimed wine, Oculus, with a series of special events across Western Canada. The commemorative occasions include rare magnums of Oculus “*Buy the Glass*” at top restaurants in British Columbia and Alberta and a selection of intimate activities in the winery’s exclusive *Oculus Salon*: from vintage library and barrel tastings to “*Message on a Bottle*” Oculus signings by Chief Winemaker John Simes and Proprietor Anthony von Mandl. Members of the Okanagan Symphony will hold special performances in the piazza of this breathtaking winery. Mission Hill’s iconic Bordeaux-inspired wine, Oculus, is elegant, complex and represents the pinnacle of everything Mission Hill does from viticulture to winemaking. More details on the celebrations are at [www.missionhillwinery.com/101010](http://www.missionhillwinery.com/101010).



We consider the 2006 vintage of Oculus to be the best yet, having benefited from remarkable effort and investment that goes into every vine and cask that produces it. Since 2005, Michel Rolland the world’s leading master wine blender and winemaker with numerous 100 point wines to his name, has collaborated with Proprietor Anthony von Mandl and Winemaker John Simes on all aspects of Oculus’ production. Their uncompromising approach to quality and persistent striving for perfection throughout the viticulture and winemaking process makes Oculus the ultimate expression of its region.

Oculus is both a Roman-inspired architectural feature and Mission Hill winery’s equivalent of a First Growth wine. Like its namesake in Rome’s Pantheon, the Oculus (Latin for ‘eye’) at Mission Hill is the only source of natural light into the winery’s famed underground barrel cellar.

The 1997 debut vintage of Oculus epitomized a fusion of Old World and new World winemaking traditions rooted in the soils of the South Okanagan. Today Oculus is a rich, elegant and refined Merlot dominant blend that has captured the attention of sommeliers, collectors and consumers worldwide. Described by noted British wine critic Jancis Robinson as one of the best red wines in Canada, Oculus set the stage for premium Canadian wine and over the years has rated highly with the press garnering a 99 by Natalie MacLean, 91 by Anthony Gismondi, 92 by David Lawrason and 94 by John Schreiner, to name a few.

In Natalie MacLean’s words, the current 2006 vintage is a “Bordeaux-inspired red from one of B.C.’s top producers, which blends Old World finesse with New World power. The winery hand-picks and sorts grapes from the best blocks in its’ Oliver and Osoyoos estate vineyards. The wine is aged in French barrels for 14.5 months before bottling. All of this coddling results in a wine that delivers hedonistic ripples of pleasure on the palate. A core of blackcurrant and cassis is enclosed in a cigar box. Perfect for when you cash in your Google stock. Pair with: beef wellington, rib roast with coffee rub, venison, pork tenderloin. 96 points. Drink: 2009-2018”.

“This rare and limited wine embodies the relentless pursuit of excellence at Mission Hill Family Estate and reflects the depth and complexity possible from the unique *terroir* of the Okanagan Valley,” says von Mandl. “We first envisioned the potential to craft international caliber wine almost three decades ago, when I purchased Mission Hill in 1981. In that short span, we’ve grown from just a handful of wineries to almost 200 and matured as a community with the BC VQA celebrating a successful 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Similarly, a decade since Oculus’ debut, we invite you to join John and myself as we celebrate at the winery and in the finest restaurants across Western Canada.”

“Oculus was the one of the first ultra-premium wines from the Okanagan Valley. This wine has helped not only Mission Hill but British Columbia be recognised as a serious wine producer and a quality wine region internationally. I am proud to share the quality that BC has to offer and the story of Mission Hill and this iconic brand with my customers,” said Robert Byford, Managing Partner, Glowbal Group.

**October is Oculus Month - Mission Hill Family Estate announces a series of celebratory activities across British Columbia and Alberta including:**

**Winery Celebrations - Noon to 4 pm | Saturday, October 9**

***Message on a Bottle***

At Mission Hill Family Estate, Winemaker John Simes will be on hand to personalize bottles of Oculus in the *Oculus Salon*.

***Tasting Notes***

Mission Hill Sommeliers Jesse Harden and Mike Lee enlighten guests through Oculus barrel samples, library and vertical tastings, and magnum tastings in the luxurious Oculus Salon. Live music performances by members of the Okanagan Symphony. Proceeds from the Oculus tastings will be donated to the Okanagan Symphony.

***Vintage Vantage***

Be among the first to obtain the coveted 2007 Oculus vintage prior to its scheduled spring 2011 release. A winery cellar-door exclusive of our premium wine, which is available by allocation only in handcrafted, white pine crates!

***Buy the Glass Destinations - October 8-11***

For the past decade fine dining establishments across the west have been early supporters of premium Okanagan Valley wine. We thank them for their ongoing support and encourage patrons to enjoy this debut opportunity to savour Oculus by the glass at:

- Bear Mountain, Victoria
- Bearfoot Bistro, Whistler
- Blue Water Café, Vancouver
- Characters Restaurant, Edmonton
- Cioppino's Mediterranean Grill & Enoteca, Vancouver
- COAST Restaurant, Vancouver
- Hardware Grill, Edmonton
- Hotel Eldorado, Kelowna
- Hotel Grand Pacific, Victoria
- Lupo, Vancouver – newly installed enomatic with Oculus by the glass for the month of October!
- Post Hotel & Spa, Lake Louise
- Quattro, Whistler
- Seasons in the Park, Vancouver
- Teahouse, Vancouver
- The Wickanninish Inn, Tofino

“Oculus is the hard work, artistry and passion of a winemaker and its owner to show the world that Canada can make some of the best red wines in the world,” said André Saint-Jacques, proprietor, Bearfoot Bistro.

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**About Mission Hill Family Estate**

Mission Hill Family Estate is world renowned for its award-winning wines, stunning setting and architecture, and its Cuisine du Terroir-based Terrace Restaurant. The winery's vineyards are located in five distinct growing regions of British Columbia's Okanagan Valley. Reflective of the origin and unique character of the Valley and of the careful 'Vine to Bottle' program, Oculus, our signature Bordeaux-inspired wine, represents the pinnacle in premium winemaking. Proprietor Anthony von Mandl and winemaker John Simes produce elegant internationally acclaimed wines with New World flavours and Old World refinement from this incomparable wine valley. Visit [www.missionhillwinery.com](http://www.missionhillwinery.com) for more information.

**Media Contact:**

Lori Pike

Director of Public Relations, Mission Hill Family Estate

T: 604.264.4029 / E: [lpike@missionhillwinery.com](mailto:lpike@missionhillwinery.com)

Additional images and interviews available upon request.

