



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**VMF ESTATES PROPRIETOR ANTHONY VON MANDL ANNOUNCES  
SUCCESSION PLAN FOR WINEMAKING AT MISSION HILL FAMILY ESTATE**

**Okanagan Valley, British Columbia – May 20, 2015** – VMF Estates Proprietor **Anthony von Mandl**, today announced that after 23 transformative years of putting the Okanagan Valley on the world wine map, **John Simes** has decided to transition from his role as *Chief Winemaker at Mission Hill Family Estate* to allow him to focus on the von Mandl Family’s diverse and exceptional Okanagan vineyards. Said Simes: *“I see our vineyards as the last frontier in allowing our wines to become amongst the most sought after in the world. Our terroir and microclimates are found nowhere else, and it now comes down to a relentless quest to drive the most in terms of quality and distinctiveness out of each and every vine. Twenty years ago, no one believed that wines like Oculus, Compendium and Perpetua were possible, or that an Okanagan Pinot Noir such as Martin’s Lane would make the world stage in London. With the von Mandl Family’s commitment to continuously raising the bar and their commitment to leading edge research and technology in our vineyards, there is no telling where we can go from here.”*

Following the addition of **CedarCreek Estate Winery**, located across the lake from Mission Hill Family Estate in early 2014, the family created **VMF Estates** (von Mandl Family Estates) to encompass the Family’s winery and vineyards in the Okanagan Valley which began with Mission Hill in 1981, which at the time was one of only five wineries in the Valley.

*“Our Family’s pioneering efforts to place our Valley on the world wine map began more than 30 years ago at a time when no one even contemplated the possibility of producing wines in this region that could stand next to the best in the world,”* said Anthony von Mandl. *“Since then it has been a relentless quest driven on a passionate belief that the terroir and microclimates of the Okanagan, which are found here and nowhere else in the world, could deliver on that dream.”*

In 1992, after an extensive international search, Anthony von Mandl convinced a young, star New Zealand winemaker, **John Simes**, to join Mission Hill Family Estate just in time for the fall harvest. His first vintage of Mission Hill ‘Grand Reserve’ (now the ‘Mission Hill Reserve Chardonnay’) won the trophy for ‘Best Chardonnay in the World’ at the 1994 International Wine & Spirit Competition in London.

*“This was the first time I knew my dream had legs,”* continued von Mandl. *“John has gone on to transform not only our wines, but the world’s perception of our region – indeed he put the Okanagan Valley on the world wine map. Along the way, John was also instrumental in assembling our Family’s extraordinary collection of estate vineyards located throughout the Valley from West Kelowna in the North, to Osoyoos in the South, on the US border.”*

## Winemaking Transition at Mission Hill Family Estate

With the addition of **CedarCreek Estate Winery** early last year, VMF Estates was fortunate to add another passionate, talented and relentless winemaker, Australian-born **Darryl Brooker** who had worked tirelessly to take CedarCreek to the next level for the preceding four years.

Over the next several months, Darryl will transition to assume the role of *Chief Winemaker* at Mission Hill Family Estate with the 2015 harvest. John will complete the winemaking and all final blending for the remarkable 2014 vintage and will remain a key resource to Darryl to ensure Mission Hill's continuing legacy of numerous icon wines he has crafted such as the award-winning Oculus.

Darryl brings a breadth of experience to Mission Hill that began at Mountadam Vineyards in Australia, followed by Villa Maria in New Zealand and experience in crafting world class wines at Flat Rock Cellars, Hillebrand and Thirty Bench wineries in Ontario.

In commenting on his appointment, Darryl Brooker stated: *"It will be a privilege to make some of Canada's most iconic wine brands found exclusively in the Mission Hill portfolio – wines that deliver exceptional quality in every vintage. The passion behind the Mission Hill brand and the unwavering commitment to help put the Okanagan Valley on the international wine map is something I am incredibly motivated by and excited to be a part of."*

With an optimistic look to the future von Mandl states: *"My Family and I could not be more pleased for John and Darryl's next moves. They both share the same winemaking philosophy and commitment to excellence and continuous improvement that we need to take us and the Okanagan to new levels of international acclaim that few today even contemplate is possible. The first and formative Chapter of our region and Mission Hill Family Estate has been written - now we begin the second."*

### About VMF Estates

Founded by Proprietor Anthony von Mandl, VMF Estates is the von Mandl Family's collection of some of the most exceptional estate vineyards and upscale wineries in the Okanagan Valley, including **Mission Hill Family Estate, CedarCreek Estate Winery, Martin's Lane Winery**, and the about to be released **CheckMate Artisanal Winery**, a small, gravity-fed winery located on the "Golden Mile", just south of the town of Oliver in British Columbia. Each winery operates fully independently, with its own hallmark and identity. The common purpose is to produce wines that can stand alongside the best in the world.

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### For further information contact:

Ian Galbraith, VMF Estates

Tel: (604) 269-7017

[igalbraith@vmfestates.com](mailto:igalbraith@vmfestates.com)