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Meritage Alliance elects officers

Santa Rosa, CA, Wednesday, May 22, 2013—Susie Bynum, national sales manager for Ehret Family Winery, was re-elected to a third term as chairman of The Meritage Alliance at the group’s annual meeting on May 17. As chairman, Bynum will lead the marketing efforts to promote the Meritage concept to both trade and consumers.

Also elected to one-year terms as officers were Donnis Topel, co-owner of Topel Winery, who will be treasurer, and Peggy Gsell, brand manager for Boisset Family Estates, who will serve as secretary.

The Meritage Alliance was founded in 1988 by a handful of winemakers who felt their complex Bordeaux-style blends deserved a classier name than simply “Red Table Wine.” They conducted an international competition to come up with a moniker – the winner was “Meritage,” a combination of the words “merit” (for the quality of the grapes) and “heritage” (for the centuries-old tradition of blending wine). The word rhymes with “heritage,” but is frequently mispronounced to rhyme with “garage.” The Meritage Alliance now has more than 320 members throughout the United States and in Canada, Australia, Argentina, Mexico, France and Israel.

While some questioned whether Meritage would ever “take off” in the wine industry, it has more than prevailed. For the past three years, red blended wines, particularly Meritage wines, have been the fastest growing wine category across all price points, with sales up more than 26% in the last year alone.