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### ***Susie Bynum elected chairman of Meritage Alliance***

**Healdsburg, CA, Monday, June 27, 2011**—Susie Bynum, national sales and marketing director for Ehret Family Winery, was elected chairman of The Meritage Alliance at the organization’s annual meeting on Thursday, June 23.

The group also elected Bill Smart, communications director at Dry Creek Vineyard, to the post of secretary. Outgoing chairman Kim Stare Wallace, vice president of Dry Creek Vineyard, was named treasurer.

Robert Whitley, syndicated wine writer and publisher of Wine Review Online, was the featured speaker at the meeting. Whitley also organizes several highly regarded wine competitions, including the Critics Challenge. As part of his presentation he revealed plans to start a new international competition called “Mainly Meritage,” focusing on Bordeaux-style wines. The competition is slated to be held in mid-2012.

More than 280 wineries in 25 states and six countries are members of The Meritage Alliance. In 2010, Meritage and red wine blends was the fastest growing wine category across all price points, up 14% from 2009 sales according to a survey by the Symphony IRI Group, which studies domestic table wine sales at major U.S. food and drug stores.

**The Meritage Alliance, founded by a group of California vintners in 1988, is a wine industry organization dedicated to promoting wines blended in the tradition of Bordeaux. For more information, go online to [www.meritagealliance.com](http://www.meritagealliance.com) or [www.facebook.com/meritagealliance](http://www.facebook.com/meritagealliance).**