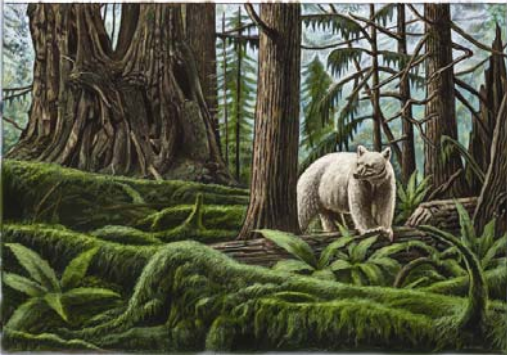


## **New British Columbian Wine Supports Ecosystem Conservation** ***WHITE BEAR Wine to Aid Great Bear Rainforest Preservation***



Oliver, British Columbia – May 6, 2009 – Artisan Wine Co is pleased to announce the launch of WHITE BEAR Wines, at the EPIC sustainable living expo this week. New aromatic BC wine, WHITE BEAR is 100% Okanagan grown and crafted. In partnership with several environmental organizations, the winery has committed to raise awareness and funds for the long term preservation of the Great Bear Rainforest on BC's Central Coast and for the conservation of the Spirit Bear's habitat. Developed solely to support the cause, 15% of sales from this wine will be donated to marine and rainforest conservation in the Great Bear Rainforest with World Wildlife Fund Canada and Tides Canada's White Bear Fund and other partners.

BC's Great Bear Rainforest is 21 million acres and is the largest temperate rainforest in the world. It is of great significance globally for its value as a carbon sink holder of CO<sub>2</sub> and for its extensive biodiversity. It is home to grizzly bears, coastal wolves, salmon and the rare white Kermode or Spirit Bear, which exists nowhere in the world besides this rainforest. There are only 400 spirit bears in the world. Protecting habitat of this umbrella species will aid many other species. A timely concern for all Canadians, the BC government recently announced they were saving over 2 million hectares of the Great Bear Rainforest for parks and conservancies. This is part of a larger, globally significant conservation effort that is currently underway so that this rainforest can thrive for future generations.

"The salmon spawn from the coast to the Okanagan and the ecosystem we rely upon in the Valley for growing grapes is intricately tied to our vast coastal reserve. We wanted to make a difference not just with the sustainable viticulture practices, but also by helping preserve BC for the future and we are proud to work with local environmental groups in support of this truly global treasure," said Daniel Zeponi, President Artisan Wine Co. "We believe conservation is the right thing to do for our environment and our business. Consumers are incorporating sustainability along with affordability as part of their buying practices. These wines are a great value at only \$12.99, and are not only ideal every day table wines, but are also for a great cause."

"WWF-Canada is encouraged by Artisan's commitment to ecosystem conservation in BC. The contribution from sales of WHITE BEAR wines will make a real difference in our freshwater and marine work on the north coast. The proceeds from Artisan will help us conserve eelgrass habitats. Many salmon species - the major food source for Spirit bears - spend part of their lives in eelgrass habitats so protecting these is vitally important and highlights just how interconnected these species really are," said Michele Patterson, Acting Vice President, Pacific Region.

"Tides Canada celebrates Artisan Wine's ongoing commitment to sustainability in the Great Bear Rainforest. This is a great example of how business can be a force for change and play a role in creating a healthy planet," said Ross McMillan, President and CEO of Tides Canada and one of the principal architects of the \$120 million conservation financing package for the Great Bear Rainforest.

Described by Wine Diva Daenna Van Mulligen as "an honourable effort to support habitat preservation of BC's Great Bear Rainforest", she recommends them as "easy drinking whites, crisp and refreshing". The wines are available in wine and liquor stores in BC and Alberta in the following varietals: Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Blanc, and later this summer an aromatic Riesling will be released.

More details on the wine and eco-initiatives are at [www.whitebearwines.com](http://www.whitebearwines.com). Artisan Wine President Daniel Zeponi will also be speaking about the cause, sustainability and viticulture practices at EPIC, the afternoon of Sunday May 10. For additional information please visit [www.epicexpo.com](http://www.epicexpo.com). If you are having an event and would like to support the cause by serving WHITE BEAR Wines please contact us at [info@whitebearwines.com](mailto:info@whitebearwines.com).

**About WWF Canada**

WWF, the global conservation organization, exists to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature. Our focus is to conserve the world's biological diversity, ensure that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable and promote the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. In BC, WWF-Canada is committed to an integrated Pacific Coast, a region of inspiring natural beauty and diversity – from summit to seafloor. For more information please visit [www.wwf.ca](http://www.wwf.ca)

**About Tides Canada**

Tides Canada provides philanthropic, financial and project management services to change makers —philanthropists, businesses, social entrepreneurs and civil organizations. Tides Canada led the \$4 million Canadian fundraising campaign and supported coalition building among Canada's leading environmental organizations to ensure a healthy future for the Great Bear Rainforest. Founded in December 2000, Tides Canada has offices in Vancouver and Toronto.

[www.tidescanada.org/](http://www.tidescanada.org/)

**About Artisan Wine Co.**

Artisan Wine Co. is founded in British Columbia's world renowned Okanagan Valley. A natural extension of the Pacific Northwest wine region, the Okanagan is located approximately 300 km east of the Pacific, nestled in a rain shadow of the Coastal and Monashee mountains. The Valley is dotted with a series of lakes, which provide moderate year round temperatures, ideal for grape cultivation in the region's five sub-appellations. Our sustainably managed vineyards span the breadth of the 160 km Valley, which is arid and hot in the southern Black Sage/Osoyoos area and milder in the northern Kelowna region. These contribute to our extensive portfolio of fine wines. The brands range from classic and traditional to irreverent and fun. For more information please visit [www.artisanwineco.ca](http://www.artisanwineco.ca).

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