



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:

Karen Fischer
Napa Valley Think Tank
707-963-2055
karen@nvthinktank.com
www.nvthinktank.com

Charlotte Gourraud
SARCO/Laffort
707-343-1632
charlotte.gourraud@laffort.com
www.sarco.fr / www.laffort.com

NAPA VALLEY THINK TANK AND SARCO LABORATORIES ANNOUNCE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
Companies join forces to offer analytical innovations to the Napa Valley winemaking community

SAINT HELENA, CA/BORDEAUX, FRANCE, April 4, 2011— Napa Valley Think Tank (NVTT) and Societe d'Application de Recherche de Conseil en Oenologie (SARCO) today announced a strategic partnership designed to accelerate NVTT's growth and help bring new and innovative analytical services to the Napa Valley winemaking community. Under the partnership agreement, SARCO will invest in a minority stake in NVTT as part of a broader strategy to fast-track NVTT's expansion to offer a full range of technical and analytical services.

NVTT opened its doors in August 2010, offering analytical wine testing services, winemaking supplies and tools for the winemaker. Early in 2011, NVTT began development of a new range of analytical services to expand its capabilities beyond traditional harvest-related analyses to include a wide range of phenolic, aromatic and microbiology testing. The partnership with SARCO helps facilitate a rapid go-to-market strategy for the new analyses capabilities, which include TCA analysis, Ethyl Phenol (4EP/4EG) analysis, aroma and flavor analyses, and export analysis, among several others.

SARCO has been developing state-of-the-art analytical techniques for the wine industry since its inception over 20 years ago. Its team of over 20 specialists includes doctors, engineers, enologists, chemists and microbiologists, each with specific expertise in areas such as phenolics, microbiology and aromatics. "Forming a partnership with SARCO helps us to bring new analyses and new services to our customers more quickly. Their laboratory in Bordeaux is well-respected, and has been established for more than two decades," said Andy Erickson, Managing Partner of NVTT. "At the same time, the constant drive to continually experiment and improve on what we are doing in Napa is exciting," he continued. "I think both sides have a lot to offer one another, and the partnership will bring a fresh perspective to the quantitative side of winemaking."

NVTT has worked since its creation to establish relationships with a number of prominent winemakers in Napa Valley. The vision has always been to be a focal point for the winemaking community. “We bring technical know-how and expertise from winemaking regions around the world and we gain the opportunity to interact with and serve some of the world’s best winemakers,” said Luc Laffort, Directeur General of Laffort SA, parent company of SARCO. “Investing in NVTT solidifies our commitment in the region and gives us a front-seat in the winemaking mecca of Napa Valley,” he continued.

The teams from both organizations have already begun formally collaborating on a number of projects. “Every person we have met at SARCO shares the passion of the Think Tank team to create something new and different,” said Erickson. “When we are together, it seems like the energy level goes up. This is just the kind of exchange I was imagining when I came up with the idea for Think Tank.” Prior to opening its doors, NVTT worked closely with Laffort, the century-old parent company to SARCO, to develop a retail program to carry Laffort’s full line of winemaking products, including yeasts, enzymes, fining agents, tannins, among others.

Napa Valley Think Tank (NVTT) is an analytical wine laboratory and resource center for the winemaking community in Napa Valley. Opened in 2010, NVTT tests and analyzes wine, sells wine related products and equipment and offers seminars and other technical services such as trials, blending s and tastings to winemakers.

Societe d’Application de Recherche de Conseil en Oenologie (SARCO) is a state-of-the-art analytical laboratory based in Bordeaux, France. The SARCO laboratory has been COFRAC accredited since 1995 and has been approved by the INAO (Institut National des appellations d'origine) and FRANCEAGRIMER (a French governmental body responsible for wine, fruit, vegetables and horticulture) for official analyses. Through its research unit, SARCO works in close collaboration with some of the most renowned research centres in the world such as the Institute of Vine and Wine Sciences in Bordeaux (Institut Supérieur de la vigne et du Vin de Bordeaux - ISVV), the Paul Sabatier University (Université Paul Sabatier, Toulouse), the Australian Wine Research Institute, the University of Stellenbosh (South Africa), and the University of Udine (Italy), SupAgro/INRA Montpellier.

#