

Virginia Agribusiness Council
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MEDIA RELEASE

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VA. AGRIBUSINESS COUNCIL AWARDS RAUSSE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Richmond, Virginia – Gabriele Rausse, of Charlottesville, has been awarded the Virginia Agribusiness Council’s 2011 Distinguished Service Award during the Virginia Wine Expo on February 25, 2011 in Richmond. Rausse, a winery owner, consultant, and educator, was recognized by Virginia Agribusiness Council President Donna Pugh Johnson for his meritorious service to the State’s agribusiness industry.

Rausse immigrated to America in the 1970’s from his native Vicenza Italy to work in assisting the founders of Barboursville Vineyards. With his help, Barboursville became one of the first commercial Vinifera wineries in the state. After leaving Barboursville, Mr. Rausse opened his own vineyard, Gabriele Rausse Vineyard in Afton. Throughout his career, he has served as a consultant and mentor to over forty vineyards and ten wineries who are establishing their businesses.

Making the presentation, Council President Donna Pugh Johnson Johnson quoted a Council member who relayed, “To say that Gabriele knows and understands vineyards and wineries in Virginia is an understatement. He has defined, challenged and lived winemaking and chosen to share his experiences and knowledge with many of us who wanted to become part of the industry and help advance it. He has a gentle and quiet style, but they belie the passion and ultimate commitment he has to his passion – the hard work of a well-tended vineyard and the making of delicious wine.”

Mr. Rausse’s promotion of Virginia wines extends to educating the public as an instructor for UVa’s “Travel and Learn Program” and for the enology program at Piedmont Community College. With his assistance and encouragement the State Fair of Virginia begin their wine competition in the late 1990s, which he continues to serve as Head Judge.

In the shadow of the original “Father of Virginia Wine”, Thomas Jefferson, Mr. Rausse is the Assistant Director of Gardens and Grounds at Monticello, where he has recreated Thomas Jefferson’s historic vineyard, grafting and planting 22 vinifera varieties on the same hillside. The wine industry has demonstrated their profound respect for Rausse by naming him the 1996 Virginia Wine Person of the Year, and also bestowing on him the Gordon W. Murchie Lifetime Achievement Award.

Johnson commented, “Without Gabriele’s hard work and dedication to push ideas forward, what we know is now a leading Virginia industry of wine would not exist.” She

went on to note, “He is, in many ways, the Father of the modern Virginia Wine Industry. It is our honor to present him with our 2011 Distinguished Service Award.”

The Virginia Agribusiness Council represents agricultural and forestry producers, suppliers, marketers, processors and commodity associations in the Commonwealth with a unified voice through its government affairs activities. The Council has a combined membership of over 40,000. For more information on the Virginia Agribusiness Council, visit www.va-agribusiness.org.

Attached Photo (left to right): Ann L. Heidig, Lake Anna Winery, Spotsylvania & member of Council Board of Directors; Gabriele Rausse, Gabriele Rausse Vineyards, Charlottesville; Donna Pugh Johnson, President, Virginia Agribusiness Council, Richmond.

