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CONTACT:

Jeff Beringer 312/988-2431

Molly Callahan 312/988-2295

MAKE WEEKNIGHTS A WINNER WITH WINE

Quick Cooking Expert Provides Fuss-Free Recipes with Simple Wine Selections

CHICAGO – Savoring a weeknight meal made in less than 30 minutes with a glass of wine may sound like a miracle to most people, but Sam Gugino, author of *Cooking to Beat the Clock - Delicious Inspired Meals in 15 Minutes* has the solution. Not only does he offer flavorful dinner recipes and tips for hasty cooks, he suggests everyday wines to pair with anything from tacos to pasta, showing that weeknight meals can be easy to prepare and just as easy to enhance by enjoying a glass wine.

Gugino says that it doesn't need to be a special occasion anymore to savor a homemade dinner and a glass of wine. "Enjoying a glass of wine on an ordinary Wednesday night with a plate of pasta can be just as quick and easy as popping open a can of soda or beer and having a pizza delivered," says Gugino. "And with all the affordable wines in grocery stores these days, it's easy to pick up a bottle when shopping for your dinner ingredients."

Start to Finish in 30 Minutes

With families facing conflicting schedules and spending late nights at the office, Gugino is providing Monday through Friday meals prepared in fewer than 30 minutes matched with everyday wines on wineanswers.com, a Web site offering busy Americans concise information about wine.

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Gugino's recipes focus on fresh, natural flavors and ingredients and are straightforward enough to appeal to both beginner and gourmet cooks. He recommends the following for an easy

Monday – Friday menu with these great wine pairings:

- **Monday** – Turkey Tacos with Red Pepper Salsa with Chardonnay or Beaujolais
- **Tuesday** – Shrimp Scampi and Basmati Rice with Sauvignon Blanc
- **Wednesday** – Pasta with Rapid Ratatouille Sauce with Chianti, Sangiovese or Sauvignon Blanc
- **Thursday** – Curried Chicken with Apples and Sweet Potatoes with Riesling
- **Friday** – Southwestern Flank Steak with Warm Potato and Black Bean Salad with Zinfandel, Syrah or Shiraz

Ready, Set, Don't Fret

Many people unnecessarily avoid experimenting with matching wine with their meals for fear of making the wrong decision. Nearly one-third of wine drinkers say they are perplexed when it comes to pairing wine with food, according to a study by Merrill Research & Associates on consumer wine-drinking attitudes and behaviors.

Gugino says there's nothing to be afraid of when choosing wine with weeknight meals. "The general rule of thumb is to drink what you like with the foods that you like. If that means enjoying a glass of red wine with chicken fajitas or a glass of white wine with beef stir fry, go for it."

Gugino offers these "timesaving tips" on how to enjoy weeknights with wine:

- **No worries about wasting.** Food not eaten will do fine in a refrigerator until the next day. Similarly, an unfinished bottle of wine will keep in the refrigerator for about 3-5 days. Tuesday evening, simply reheat Monday night leftovers in the microwave, uncork that bottle of wine, and you've got yourself another great meal in minutes.
- **Trust your taste.** Forget the myth that you need to be an expert on wine in order to enjoy it with your meal. There's no need to waste too much time when you can just go with what you like – red or white. Just let your taste buds be your guide.
- **Stock it up.** Make it easy on yourself and keep several affordable bottles of both red and white wines in stock. It's easy to create a pantry of wine – and you don't need a fancy cellar to do it. Simply find a spot away from heat and light, perhaps in a kitchen cabinet, to keep your favorites on hand.

- **No need to get fancy.** If you're cooking to beat the clock, do not waste your time trying to track down a fancy wine glass. Any wine compliments a meal whether it's served in a stemmed wine glass or even a tumbler.

Wining and Dining on the Web

According to Wine Market Council President, John Gillespie, great taste does exist at good value when it comes to wine. "There's really no need to spend a lot of money on wine. There are endless wine options, particularly those in the under \$15 range that you can pair with any meal – whether it's a weeknight, weekend or a holiday celebration meal."

For those who could use a few helpful hints, visit wineanswers.com, the new 24-hour-a-day resource created by the Wine Market Council with the help of leading wine and culinary experts. The site features, among other things, a searchable archive that will answer any wine-related question in just seconds. Or, visitors can e-mail their questions to a wine expert panel and receive an e-mail answer in two business days or less.

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