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REPORT ON TALTARNI'S IMPERIAL LONG LUNCH *Big Bottle Day at Taltarni - A Huge Success*

Melbourne, 6th May 2005 - Taltarni successfully hosted its first Imperial Long Lunch on Sunday 1st May at its Red Earth Café, Taltarni Vineyards, Moonambel. Winemakers and guests celebrated harvest with a divine three course lunch designed to complement Imperial wines, looking superb still after 15 years cellaring.

Taltarni's Imperial Long Lunch was an intimate occasion for Taltarni's Cellar Club Members and guests to sample wines aged in 'large format bottles'. "The event attracted nearly 40 attendants from the Pyrenees, Ballarat, Maryborough and Melbourne, upholding Taltarni's focus in creating a tourist destination and to providing an array of exciting and interactive events", says Cellar Door Manager Marc Southam.

The theme of an *Imperial Long Lunch* and sampling older wines from Imperial and Magnum bottles is seen as both a novel concept and an opportunity to highlight Taltarni's philosophy of creating approachable wines to enjoy now or which will age gracefully to open for special occasions.

Taltarni's three key winemakers presented an interesting insight into 'big bottle' wines, regional wine styles and the company's motive for bottling wine in 'large format bottles'. Senior winemaker and General Manager of Operations, Leigh Clarnette, explained the history, different naming of big bottles and answered the question of – why bottle big? "Bottling a well-structured balanced wine in an Imperial (6Lt) bottle, stored under ideal conditions could increase the wine's longevity by up to four times," says Leigh.

Experienced sparkling winemaker Louella McPhan discussed the intricacies of Magnums of 1995 and the sought after new release 2001 *Clover Hill* sparkling wines tasted on the day. In addition to *Clover Hill's* sequence of awards including *Australasian Sparkling Wine of the Year* for 1998 and 1999 vintages and most recently *Tasmanian Vineyard of the Year*, the 2001 vintage is being reported by winemakers as one of the best vintages for the *Clover Hill* sparkling.

The highlight of the day – besides the challenge of opening the Imperials was sampling the Imperials of 1988 and 1991 *Taltarni Cabernet Sauvignon*. 1988 was smooth and velvety and the 1991 *Cabernet Sauvignon* a 'cracker' - filled with rich licorice and spice. French oenologist Loïc Le Calvez took great delight in discussing the 1991 *Taltarni Cabernet Sauvignon*, describing it as "one of the best wines he has tried." The 1991 vintage in the Pyrenees was drier producing bunches smaller than average to yield fruit with exceptional colour and flavour.

Auctioning one of five unreleased and unlabelled 2003 Double Magnums of Taltarni's pinnacle *Cephas* shiraz, cabernet sauvignon blend was easy after witnessing the aging potential of Taltarni's great reds. With a reserve price of \$200, the wine's price quickly escalated to a closing bid of \$452, bought by Melbourne businessman Mark O'Brien. Taltarni also presented an unreleased Magnum of *Taltarni Brut 2003* as a spot prize to Alison Richardson of Daylesford.

Similar to Taltarni's renowned *Taltarni Cup*, the *Imperial Long Lunch* is expected to become an annual event on Taltarni's Calendar. Visit www.taltarni.com.au for a full update of Taltarni's calendar of events.

Media Contact: Emily White, Public Relations Manager, Taltarni Vineyards
emilyw@taltarni.com.au – Ph: (03) 9417 9123 – Mobile: (0) 418 586 266