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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monthly Studio Exhibit Showcases Port Angeles' Vibrant Art Community

Founding Artist Uniquely Portrays Olympic Cellars' Award-Winning History

Port Angeles, Wash., April 9, 2008 – Resident artist Bob Stokes is beginning to realize his long-term vision for one of the Olympic Peninsula's unique assets – its large artist population – one step at a time. Port Angeles' *Second Weekend*, a catered monthly exhibit of the works of northwest artists, is an initial step toward Stokes' goal to create a vibrant arts community that will bring locals downtown, draw tourists to the city and energize a second tier of the local economy, consisting of lodging establishments, restaurants and complementary businesses. The exhibits, which began last year in Stokes' loft-style studio on First Street, have inspired the participation of two additional venues, *Waterfront Art Gallery* on Railroad Avenue, and *The Anderson Gallery* on North Laurel, and together the three galleries are attracting in excess of 300 visitors each month.

"We need to work together to raise the profile of the artist community to a level that it becomes a draw for people outside the area, as well as for locals," says Stokes. "We're fortunate to have a Chamber of Commerce, a City Council and a Visitor Bureau in Port Angeles that recognize the strength and potential of the local arts community and support our efforts."

Continuing to Create

A 30-year veteran of the lighting industry, Stokes has created custom luminations for a client list that includes film maker George Lucas, fashion designer Ralph Lauren and Pope John Paul II. In the last several years, however, he has turned his attention to creating art in multimedia.

Recently, Stokes joined forces with local fiber artist Jeanne Couillard Jones on a custom project for Port Angeles' Olympic Cellars Winery. The challenge: find a unique, insightful way to display more than 70 wine medals received by the winery in its 29-year history. Stokes and Jones titled their creative solution, ***The Vendange***.

Portraying History through Art

The Vendange is French for “grape harvest,” a word that signals the excitement and promise of the annual vintage. Stokes and Jones envisioned a piece that would capture Olympic Cellars’ promise for the future, while also telling the story of its past. Paints representing the colors of early spring, mid-summer and late fall were splashed onto twisted bolts of silk. Canvas was draped and intermixed, adding shape and color. Foliage evolved, with branches and tendrils giving way to clusters of grapes loaded with gold, silver and bronze medals. Sheep fleece, a final touch, elongated the canvas’ curves, smoothing the edges and carrying color and form throughout. The vine had taken life!

“When I look at our *Vendange* I see a living vine celebrating the accomplishments of Olympic Cellars’ owners and winemakers over the past 29 years,” says owner Kathy Charlton. “With ample space remaining for future accolades, the piece acknowledges the promise of our own Vendange, as we celebrate the planting of vineyards on the Peninsula, local grape harvests and releases of Puget Sound Appellation wines . . . a vision that is now becoming a reality.”

Furthering the Artistic Vision

Stokes is currently heading-up a collaborative city-funded project titled *Avenue of the People*, which will soon be attracting attention in Port Angeles. Ten steel sculptures will be created and located about town, depicting ordinary people going about the tasks of everyday life.

Another step in realizing his vision will be development of “The Art Front,” an art center to be located in the old Moose Club Lodge on First Street. Plans for the center include a first floor art gallery and a second floor series of artist studios separated from a wine bar by a glass wall. This will enable visitors to enjoy a glass of wine while watching the artists at work. Stokes hopes to complete the project this summer. The third floor of the old Moose Club Lodge is the home of “Studio Bob,” where Stokes does much of his work and hosts the monthly studio exhibits.

About Olympic Cellars

Olympic Cellars is a boutique winery housed in an historic century-old barn between Port Angeles and Sequim on Washington’s Olympic Peninsula. The winery annually produces approximately 3,200 cases of hand-crafted wines on site, including the premium La Dolce Vida label, the Working Girl® series, and the Dungeness artist series. Olympic Cellars is strongly committed to supporting the physical and emotional well-being of women through its Charity of Choice and 2X Success initiatives.

Find out more about Olympic Cellars and its upcoming events by visiting the winery's website at www.olympiccellars.com, or by calling 360-452-0160. Also visit the *Working Girl*® website, www.workinggirlwines.com, for information pertaining specifically to the *Working Girl* series of wines and associated philanthropic programs.

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