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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Nationally Acclaimed and Long Awaited Ice Wine Is Released**

Branchport, NY, Apr. 24--Hunt Country Vineyards of Branchport, New York, celebrating 25 years of crafting fine Finger Lakes wines, is proud to announce the release of the 2005 vintage of its signature Vidal Blanc Ice Wine. Hunt Country's ice wines have been served at the United Nations and White House, and are featured at fine restaurants in Manhattan and elsewhere.

Plentiful sun in the summer and early fall, just enough rain and a relatively modest quantity of grapes made for perfect ripening conditions. Hopes were high for the first vintage of Hunt Country's elusive Ice Wine since 2002. The last critical need was a hard freeze. On Thanksgiving night, the temperature unexpectedly dropped sharply to 10 degrees, unleashing a flurry of excited calls to family, friends and helpers to prepare for harvest in the morning.

Under wisps of pre-dawn light, the Hunt family and crew laid out picking boxes under the rows of Vidal grapes and then quickly picked bunches of frozen grapes with gloved hands, racing against the clock, as the harvest and pressing had to be completed before any grapes thaw. Hot chocolate and coffee served by Joyce Hunt at the first break brought life back to numb fingers and toes, and with it, thoughts of friends, warm in their beds, sleeping off their Thanksgiving feasts.

By ten thirty, the boxes were filled and pressing of the frozen grapes was well underway. From the press trickled drops of exceptionally aromatic nectar, at 41 degrees Brix (the percentage of sugar at harvest) one of the sweetest pressings ever.

After covering the Macy's parade in Manhattan, photographer Julie Jacobsen of the Associated Press drove all night to capture the harvest on film. In collaboration with journalist Verena Dobnik, the resulting article appeared in newspapers all over the world. NBC then sent a producer from Maine and crew from Rochester to film all day at the winery, and a three-minute piece aired just two days later on The Today Show. As a result, Hunt Country received hundreds of pre-release orders from as far away as Alaska and Hawaii.

The luscious new 2005 vintage will be released this week to distributors across New York on an allocated basis and will be finding its way to the shelves of fine wine retailers in the next few weeks. The wine will also be available at Hunt Country Vineyards' winery in Branchport until supplies are exhausted this summer or early fall.

For more information on Vidal Blanc Ice Wine, Hunt Country Vineyards, its winery or tours, please visit [www.HuntWines.com](http://www.HuntWines.com) or call the winery at 800.946.3289. Tasting Room hours are 10am-5pm on Monday through Saturday, Noon-5pm on Sunday.

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