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Sonoma County's Most Beloved Race Horse Returns
**CAVONNIER TO MAKE SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCE
AT FAIR'S WINE COUNTRY RACING**

(Santa Rosa July 31, 2008) Cavonnier, the horse from Sebastopol that had Northern California holding its collective breath during the 1996 Kentucky Derby, will make a special guest appearance at the Sonoma County Fair's Wine Country Racing this Sunday, August 3.

August 3 marks the 13th anniversary of the celebrated gelding's win in his maiden race at the Sonoma County Fair back in 1995. He went on to wow racing fans with wins in the Santa Anita Derby and the El Camino Real Derby in 1996. And he very nearly won the Kentucky Derby, losing by a nose to Grindstone in a photo finish that took the judges five minutes to come to a decision. He was later injured in the third race of the Triple Crown, the Belmont Stakes, suffering a bowed tendon in his right foreleg.

Owned by Barbara and the late Robert Walters, Cavonnier captured the hearts of Sonoma County not only for his speed, but his heart. Chris McCarron, his jockey, was quoted in the Press Democrat: "I have never ridden a more honest or generous horse in 22 years."

This Sunday Barbara Walters will bring Cavonnier out to greet his fans, a brief break from the idyllic life he leads at the Vine Hill Ranch near Sebastopol, where Bob Walters

had created a top-notch thoroughbred facility, proving that great race horses could be raised in California. Indeed, Cavonnier was named the 1996 California-bred horse of the year.

Adding to the excitement of Sunday's races will be the opportunity to watch and wager on Big Brown in the Haskell Stakes at Monmouth Park. That race, and dozens of others from other facilities, will be shown on the Fair's screens throughout the Racing Grandstand.

In addition to seeing Cavonnier and Big Brown, fans at Wine Country Racing can indulge in the Fair's first Big Hat Day. Patrons topped by oversized or otherwise notable headwear deemed "eye-catching" by Fair officials will be rewarded with free betting vouchers and a moment of fame on the racetrack jumbotron.

Fans—as well as non-fans—also are offered a chance to win without ever placing a bet at the Fair's Win, Place and Show free cash drawing. The rules are simple: drop an entry blank into any of the 10 numbered boxes at the Win, Place and Show display on the ground level of the track. One name will be drawn from the box whose number matches that of the winning horse of the eighth race for a prize of \$250. The person whose form is drawn from the box matching the number of the second place horse will win \$150. The entry drawn from the box matching the number of the third-place horse will win \$100. Patrons must be present at the time of the drawing, which takes place right after the eighth race. The Win, Place and Show drawings are held every day at the Fair.

The Sonoma County Fair—and Wine Country Racing—continues through August 4. Fairs gates open at 11 a.m. The free Wine Country Racing seminars, with racing experts Vic Stauffer and Dr. Gordon Jones, are at 11:15 each morning in Shade Park. First post time is 12:45 p.m. For more information and printable daily schedules of events, go to www.SonomaCountyFair.com or call (707) 545-4200 ext. 202.

