



## **LYME DISEASE CASES RISING IN ONTARIO BUT HEALTH OFFICIALS NOT SPREADING PUBLIC AWARENESS**

Magnotta Winery hosts The Underground Cellar Experience to bring Lyme disease to the forefront as tick season begins

VAUGHAN, ONTARIO, May 18, 2010 – With the U.S. reporting soaring cases of Lyme disease in states located close to the Canadian border, Ontario health officials are finally beginning to acknowledge more of this tick-borne disease, recently reporting 102 cases in Ontario alone in 2008, versus Health Canada’s previous estimate of only 50 cases across Canada. But with misdiagnosis rampant due to poor testing, lack of understanding of the disease and how it mimics other major illnesses as well as complacency when it comes to spreading awareness, the number of Lyme cases in Ontario is feared to be much higher. The result: Lyme patients are falling through the cracks, lives are being ruined and the general public is in the dark.

That’s the reality that Magnotta Winery and the Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation (CanLyme) are urgently trying to get across to the public as tick season gets underway.

Along with numerous activities throughout the month of May in support of CanLyme, Magnotta Winery is presenting **The Underground Cellar Experience on Thursday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, hosted by Rossana Magnotta**, president and CEO, to attract attention to this growing health crisis. Magnotta says that some Lyme sufferers have noted that the name of the event is powerful because they feel they have had to go “underground” to get proper diagnosis and treatment.

“We innocently assume that our medical tests in Canada are reliable but misdiagnosis is the number one problem in fighting Lyme disease here. Not only is our Lyme testing poor and inaccurate, doctors are misdiagnosing patients with Multiple Sclerosis, ALS, Parkinson’s and other illnesses when, in fact, patients have Lyme,” says Magnotta. “Then when they realize what they really have, patients have to go to the U.S. for treatment because of the lack of support in Canada.”

Awareness is the key to solving the problem, says Magnotta, but health officials aren't stepping up with basic information to the public. "Where are the government's public service announcements on radio and TV and the poster campaigns and press releases that they would produce if this was any other wide spread health issue like H1N1 or SARS? They need to inform Canadians about the facts of Lyme disease, how to protect themselves against ticks, what to do if they have been bitten and the symptoms to look out for if they've been infected, but they're not."

For the past seven years, Magnotta has been tackling the obstacles that are preventing Lyme disease sufferers from being heard by telling Canadians the real story about this devastating disease that, when left untreated and improperly diagnosed, can attack every organ in the body. Taking on this cause is highly controversial because of the resistance from government and the medical community in acknowledging the extent of Lyme disease in Canada. As a result, Magnotta is recognized by the Lyme community as a pioneer in spearheading awareness.

One of the top ten misdiagnosed diseases in the world which is now found in all Canadian provinces, Lyme disease is a bacterial infection caused by the bite of an infected tick that causes flu-like symptoms in the beginning. Currently affecting millions of people, Lyme disease is curable when properly diagnosed and treated early. However, when misdiagnosed, Lyme becomes debilitating, chronic and sometimes irreversible, even fatal. This multi-organ infection can attack a person's heart, brain, bones, muscles, digestive system, skin, eyesight, hearing and more. It can cause symptoms that mimic other diseases resulting in a prolonged misdiagnosis.

### **The Underground Cellar Experience Hosted by Rossana Magnotta**

An evening of fine wine, music and candlelight featuring a selection of Magnotta's barrel aged Ontario VQA wines, the aromas and sights of Magnotta's underground barrel cellar and gourmet hors d'oeuvres. Proceeds will go to the Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation to help fund the building of Canada's first Lyme disease research and testing facility.

- Thursday, May 27, 2010
- Magnotta Vaughan, 271 Chrislea Road, Vaughan, ON. 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.
- Tickets on sale at Magnotta retail stores and at [magnotta.com](http://magnotta.com). \$50 per person. Space is limited.

Press Interviews: Mrs. Magnotta will be available to discuss current issues and problems surrounding Lyme disease. To schedule an interview, please contact: Marisa Mainella, 905-738-9463, [marisa.mainella@magnotta.com](mailto:marisa.mainella@magnotta.com)

## **About Magnotta Winery Corporation**

Magnotta Winery Corporation, established in 1990, is one of Canada's leading wine producers and retailers with seven locations in Ontario. Magnotta is a Platinum Member of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies and Canada's most award winning winery with over 3,300 awards for product excellence. Magnotta is the only company of its kind in Ontario licensed to produce and sell wine, beer and distilled products. For more information on Magnotta's involvement with Lyme disease, go to: [www.magnotta.com/Magnotta\\_Fights\\_Lyme.com](http://www.magnotta.com/Magnotta_Fights_Lyme.com)

## **About the Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation (CanLyme)**

Established in 2003, the Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation is a federally registered charitable organization dedicated to advancing Lyme research, education, screening, diagnosis and treatment in Canada. A major goal for the foundation is to build Canada's first Lyme disease research and testing facility. For more information, go to [www.canlyme.com](http://www.canlyme.com)

## **Contact Information**

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