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## **Rod Laver Named Special Honoree At Storied Ojai Tennis Tournament**

***Tickets Now On Sale for Special "Evening With Rod Laver" Honoring Only Men's Player  
To Ever Win Two Calendar Year Grand Slams and 11 Total Major Singles Titles***

OJAI, Calif. (Feb. 6, 2017) – Considered tennis royalty and one of the greatest to ever play the game, tennis great Rod Laver has been named the 2017 Ojai Tennis Tournament Honoree.

The only men's player to ever win two calendar year Grand Slams (1962 and 1969) the Australian Laver was known during his playing days as "Rocket" Rod Laver.

The announcement was made by Ojai Tennis Board Member and organizer Mark Weil and longtime Ojai resident and renowned actor Malcom McDowell in Ojai on Saturday during the Ojai Valley Tennis Club's annual fundraising reception. "Bringing Rod Laver to the Ojai Tournament is like bringing Beethoven to the music festival! My God, it's unbelievable!"

Laver will be the special guest at the Thursday Night BBQ on April 27, that will help kick off the 117<sup>th</sup> edition of the tournament to take place April 26-30 at venues all over Ventura County and headquartered at venerable Libbey Park in downtown Ojai. The Ojai is one of the oldest and most storied tournaments in the country and hosts the Pac-12 Championships, and includes 26 divisions, 1,200 players and more than 500 volunteers.

In addition to the Thursday night BBQ in Libbey Park, Laver will be honored at a special "Evening With Rod Laver" on Friday night. A fundraising event to benefit the Ojai Tennis Tournament, the event will take place at the Topa Mountain Winery. For more information and to purchase tickets online beginning on Friday, go to: [www.ojaitourney.org](http://www.ojaitourney.org).

"To have a player the stature of Rod Laver chosen as our Tournament Honoree is absolutely a dream come true," said Weil, who is the founder and director of the popular Weil Tennis Academy in Ojai. "Tennis to the people of Ojai is the air we breathe, and Rod Laver is the sweetest tennis aroma of all time! A true living legend of the game, we are so excited to honor him this year at The 117th Ojai! We want ALL of the Southern California tennis community to come to our "Evening with Rod Laver" this April and honor a living tennis treasure – the 'Rocket' Rod Laver!"

The 78-year-old Carlsbad resident Laver was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 1981. Besides his 11 singles Grand Slam titles, Laver also won six Grand Slam doubles titles and three in mixed doubles. He was the No. 1 ranked professional from 1964 to 1970,

spanning four years before and three years after the start of the Open Era. Laver's 200 singles titles are the most in tennis history, and he holds the all-time men's singles records of 22 titles in a single season (1962) and seven consecutive years (1964–70) winning at least 10 titles per season.

"I have heard so many great things about The Ojai Tournament from my good friend Stan Smith," said Laver, who recently presented the trophies to Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal after the singles final played at Rod Laver Arena at the Australian Open. "I'm really excited to be named this year's Tournament Honoree."

In recent years, Ojai Tournament honorees have included former world No. 1, Wimbledon champion and USC All-American Stan Smith, Dick Gould and Tracy Austin.

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#### **About The Ojai**

The Ojai Valley Tennis Club, Inc., is a non-profit organization that was established in 1895 by William Thacher. In 1896, the Ojai Valley Tennis Club initiated its first valley-wide tournament consisting of a single elimination mixed doubles event and The Ojai was born. Today the Ojai Valley Tennis Club is still running The Ojai but has broadened its mission to promoting interest in physical fitness and tennis, and providing recreational facilities for young people throughout the area.