



Lake County Winery Association

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Attendance Exceeds Expectations at People's Choice Wine Awards

By Esther Oertel

Nearly 300 people braved inclement weather last Saturday afternoon to taste and vote on some of Lake County's finest wines at the People's Choice Wine Awards held at Langtry Estate and Vineyards near Middletown, Calif. Attendance at the event, the third held in Lake County, far exceeded the 200 guests that were expected.

57 Lake County wines in 19 varietal categories were presented for tasting by guests, who voted on their favorites in each category. The wines selected for this judging were chosen from a group of more than 180 Lake County wines by a panel of expert wine industry judges in July of this year. The top three in each varietal category chosen by the judges in blind tastings moved on to be judged by the people at Saturday's event.

In addition to the winners in each varietal category, an overall favorite red wine and white wine was chosen by tasters. Rosa D'Oro Winery won this distinction for red wines with its 2009 Primitivo, while Wildhurst Vineyard's 2010 Chardonnay garnered the prize for white wines.

Those in attendance tasted wine at tables lined under a natural arbor that provided protection from the drizzle that fell on and off throughout the day. Bottles were disguised during the blind tasting, with even the volunteer servers unaware of the name on the bottle.

Local musician Travis Rinker's gentle acoustic offerings provided the backdrop for the day's activities, which included tastings of local olive oils facilitated by Emilio dela Cruz of Chacewater Winery and Olive Mill, tours of the historic 1874 Lillie Langtry house, and wine sensory education.

Food was offered by The Manzanita Grill at Twin Pines Casino and Hotel, The Boar's Breath Restaurant and Oven, Aromas of Yuba College, Chic Le Chef, and Batter Up Cupcakes. Main Street Bakery provided baguettes for wine tasters and S2S HotDogs was onsite for those looking for a tasty Angus Beef hot dog.

Despite gray skies, guests reported enjoyment of the event, even when rain fell just before the winning wines were announced. Jan Maddock, who traveled from Martinez, Calif. to attend the event, said that organizers had done an amazing job to make people comfortable. She added, "Lake County wines are the new secret of California."

Local wine aficionados Bob and Bonnie Schall of Nice, Calif. Reported, "despite the weather, this is a great event." Both agreed that choosing a favorite Barbera was difficult, as all in the category were excellent.

Karen Holt of Melbourne Beach, Florida attended the event with sister, Nancy Holt, of Hidden Valley Lake. A fan of chardonnay, she said all the varietals she'd tasted were excellent.

Monica Rosenthal, Executive Director of the Lake County Winery Association, expressed her appreciation for the more than 40 community volunteers and winery representatives that worked to make the event a success, as well as the committee members that put in many hours of time. "Without such dedicated volunteers, it would be impossible to host this event to showcase Lake County wines," Rosenthal said.

The following wineries were winners in their respective varietal categories:

Brassfield Estate, 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (under \$17)

Robledo Family, 2009 Sauvignon Blanc (\$17 and up)

Shannon Ridge, 2010 Chardonnay

Gregory Graham, 2009 Voignier

Bonterra, 2010 Riesling

Ceago, 2010 Muscat

Gregory Graham, 2009 Rose

Six Sigma, 2010 Pinot Noir

Rosa D'Oro, 2009 Primitivo

Shannon Ridge, 2008 Barbera

Chacewater, 2009 Syrah (under \$20)

Gregory Graham, 2007 Syrah (\$20 and up)

High Valley, 2009 Petite Syrah

Steele Winery, 2008 Merlot

Six Sigma, 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon

Steele Winery, 2008 Cabernet Franc

Snows Lake, 2005 Bordeaux Blend

Writer's Block, 2009 Tempranillo

Chacewater, 2008 Red Blend

ABOUT LCWA

The Lake County Winery Association is a non-profit organization founded in 2007 by a dozen wineries. Today, LCWA serves over 40 vintners and associate members who share a mission to promote awareness of Lake County's excellent wine industry, high elevation wines and tourism opportunities. Through partnerships with the County of Lake, the Lake County Winegrape Commission and other organizations, LCWA strives to promote the County's unique and distinct rural attributes—our lake, our mountain, our air, and our land. LCWA is committed to sustainable farming and winery operation practices and is committed to our community and its members. To learn more about LCWA, visit www.lakecountywineries.org or call 707-355-2762.

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Caption for attached photo.

Almost 60 Lake County wines were presented in the blind tasting at the 2011 People's Choice Wine Awards event on Nov.5 at Langtry Estate