

Seven Virginia Wineries Win New Old Town Sommelier Awards At Old Town Wine Festival

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Alexandria VA – Over 7000 wine enthusiasts gathered in Old Town Alexandria over Columbus Day weekend to taste the latest vintage produced by Virginia's Farm Wineries. The Old Town Alexandria Holiday Inn and Crowne Plaza Hotels were both transformed into Grand Tasting Rooms for the event which was the first urban celebration of Virginia Wine Month.

As part of the event, the Chefs and Sommeliers of Old Town Alexandria's noted restaurants were invited to participate in a private tasting of 100 wines submitted by Virginia wineries for a brand new wine award competition – the Old Town Sommelier Award. Seven winners were selected from the 100 wines submitted. And, the Inaugural winners of the Old Town Sommelier Award are: Horton Viognier, Vintage Ridge Pinot Grigio, Oasis Chardonnay Barrel Select, Prince Michel Cabernet Franc, Pearmund Petit Verdot, Potomac Point Woolloomooloo (best blend), and the Best of Show went to Breaux Nebbiolo.

In an East Coast vs. West Coast Smackdown session led by Wine Coach, Laurie Forster, 100 festival guests conducted their own blind tasting of two Virginia wines pitted against award-winning wines from the west coast. Virginia's Delfosse Cabernet Franc held its own against an award-winning Cabernet Franc from Sonoma. And, Virginia's Horton Vineyards Viognier won by a landslide (97 out of 100 votes) against a big name Washington State Viognier.

The festival featured a line-up of culinary seminars, including top authors, chefs and sommeliers from all over the region leading sessions on wine tasting, pairing and cooking with wine. Guests got to watch and taste as celebrity chefs Randy Scruggs from Occidental Restaurant, Terry Sheehan from The Boars Head Inn and Lauren DeSantis, host of The Capital Cooking Show whipped up delectable taste treats. Sommelier Andrew Stover, from Vino 50, showcased artisan wines from all over the country. Culinary pros Joe David, author of Gourmet Getaways, Laurie Forster, The Wine Coach and author of The Sipping Point, Sheera Rosenfeld, owner of Alexandria's Grape + Bean Wine Shop, Charlie Adler from Taste DC, and Master Chocolatier, Jeanne-Louise Womble of de Rochonnet Delights, along with winemakers from Tarara and Narmada wineries, led tasting sessions all day both days.

Prize drawings were another highlight of the show. Prizes included a gorgeous oak barrel clock crafted from a retired wine barrel by Wingo Wine Works. VisaVA prizes were drawn for six weekend getaway trips to The Homestead, Tides Inn, Marriott Ranch, Berry Hill, Salamander Resort,

Lansdowne Resort; and the grand VisaVA prize: a trip for two to Bordeaux, France. You can see the list of winners at www.virginiawineevents.com.

The Old Town Wine Festival was hosted by the Farm Wineries Council of Virginia and sponsored by The Washington Post, the Old Town Alexandria Holiday Inn, Old Town Crowne Plaza Hotel, Viking Appliance, Reston Limousine and Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association.

Plans are in the works for expanding next year's festivities for Columbus Day weekend, 2010.

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Media Contact:

Carl Henrickson

Farm Wineries Council

703-823-1868

carl@farmwineriescouncil.org