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THE CRAWL: PORTLAND, ORE.

OTHER CITIES MIGHT
BE BIGGER, FANCIER,
OR MORE FAMOUS, BUT
PORTLAND HAS IT ALL.
PAGE 91

Results from the 39th Annual Mendocino County Fair Wine Competition

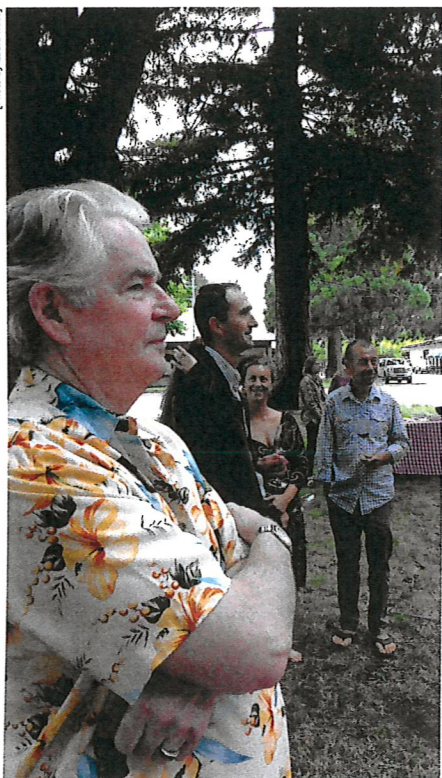
By Ellen Landis

Take a deep breath and enjoy the ride. The laid-back feel of Mendocino County, Calif., will put you in a relaxed, easygoing frame of mind. Majestic redwoods, aromatic pines, aged oak trees, and fields of gold decorated with native wildflowers abound on the drive through Yorkville, Boonville, and Philo to Anderson Valley. The bucolic path was peppered with cafes, galleries, quaint inns, barns, wineries, and vineyards perched under wispy clouds and bright blue summer skies. The scene painted a masterpiece for the eye, and the senses were further inspired as judges convened to evaluate the wines.

Handley Cellars generously hosted the judges' reception and dinner, a delicious paella feast paired with Handley wines and a variety of aged Mendocino County wines. Thanks to Handley Cellars Associate Vice President Travis Scott, winemaker Randy Schock, and the entire Handley team for the wonderful hospitality.

According to Competition Director Allan Green and Coordinator Bernadette Byrne (executive director of Mendocino Winegrowers, Inc.), entries were up this year, and among the 249 wines entered, 112 Gold/Double Gold medals were awarded. Navarro Vineyards hit a trifecta, garnering three of the five Best of Show awards: Best of Show White, Best of Show Rosé, and Best of Show Dessert. Roederer Estate captured Best of Show Sparkling, and Lazy Creek Vineyards brought home Best of Show Red. The list below offers just a snapshot of the many top wines. For full results, visit mendowine.com.

[Photo by Laura Niles]



BUBBLES

ROEDERER ESTATE MV (Multi Vintage) Brut Rosé; Anderson Valley, Calif.: This aromatic sparkling wine, composed of 56% Pinot Noir and 44% Chardonnay, displays a rich mousse and an energetic stream of tiny bubbles. Lively and pure, it captivates the senses with a yeasty, fruity aroma and fills the mouth with layers of

cherries, spiced peach compote, orange peel, and hints of brioche that persist through the elegant finish. Double Gold (GG)/Best of Class (BOC)/Best of Show Sparkling

ROSÉ

NAVARRO VINEYARDS 2016 Rosé; Mendocino, Calif.: The shimmering hue of pink diamonds is simply mesmerizing. Crafted of 93% Grenache and 7% Carignane, this dazzling dry Rosé opens with focused flavors of raspberries, loganberries, lemon-lime, a pinch of spice, and celery root puree. Juicy and exceptionally balanced, with gorgeous acidity that keeps it lifted from first sip to everlasting final one. GG/BOC/Best of Show Rosé

WHITE WINES

NAVARRO VINEYARDS 2016 Edelzwicker; Anderson Valley, Calif.: Here's a sassy white blend (44% Pinot Gris, 30% Gewürztraminer, 25% Riesling, 1% Muscat) that's chock full of personality! Aromas of lychee and white flowers make way for a succulent mouthful of tropical melon, mandarin orange, lychee, sweet Burbank plums, and a nice thread of minerality. Lightly sweet with impeccable balance—an irresistible quaff. GG/BOC/Best of Show White

HANDLEY CELLARS 2016 Riesling; Anderson Valley, Calif.: Gorgeous varietal expression of fruit wafts from the glass with this stylish and vibrant Riesling. Fresh white peaches, lemon verbena, hints of pear, and wet stone miner-

ality converge on the palate with a spine of racy acidity keeping it nervy and vivacious. Finely balanced through the mouthwatering finish. GG/BOC

MEYER FAMILY CELLARS 2015 Donnelly Creek Vineyard Chardonnay; Anderson Valley, Calif.: Stone fruit aromas draw you into this rich and layered Chardonnay. Nectarine, apricot, fresh pineapple, crème brûlée topping, and sautéed pecans join hints of spice and blood orange notes to enliven the palate. Well-structured and -textured, with a spirited finish. GG/BOC

GRAZIANO FAMILY OF WINES 2015 Chenin Blanc; Mendocino County, California: Scents of white flowers and a basket of fresh peaches capture your attention at first whiff. This Chenin Blanc bursts forward with vigor and personality. Honey Crisp apples, freestone peaches, honeysuckle, tangerine zest, and brisk acidity interweave with a solid stream of minerality on the palate. The mouthfeel is satin smooth and the finish is long. GG/BOC

BLISS FAMILY VINEYARDS 2016 Sauvignon Blanc; Mendocino, Calif.: The spot-on aromatics clearly shout "Sauv Blanc!" as the glass approaches the nose. Juicy melon, a dash of herbs, white grapefruit, hints of fresh summer grass, and a light tone of salinity unwind onto the palate with beautiful vibrancy. Pristine in balance and wonderfully refreshing all the way through. GG/BOC



Judge Dennis Martin (right) articulated his joy and gratitude in judging this year's Mendocino wine competition. He is pictured with a 3-liter bottle of 1986 Fetzer Barrel Select Cabernet Sauvignon (which Dan Berger brought from his personal cellar). Dennis made this wine during his more than 30-year career at Fetzer Vineyards. Sadly, Denny passed away a week after the competition. He was a talented winemaker, wise and respected colleague, and cherished husband, father, and friend to many in the world of wine. He will be greatly missed.

RED WINES

LAZY CREEK VINEYARDS 2015 Middleridge Ranch Pinot Noir; Anderson Valley, Calif.: Fresh black cherry fruit on the nose leads the way with this spicy and concentrated Pinot Noir. Full-bodied and immaculately balanced on the palate, where layers of wild raspberry, black plum cordial, a touch of herbs, cherry compote, licorice, and hints of oak interlace. Complex and skillfully structured with a long-lasting finish. GG/BOC/Best of Show Red

HANDLEY CELLARS 2014 Pinot Noir; Anderson Valley, Calif.: Here's an elegantly structured Burgundian style Pinot Noir. Wildly expressive, it unveils layers of cherries, white pepper, raspberries, earthiness, dried cranberries, a whisper of licorice, and forest floor elements. Well-managed oak is perfectly posed in the background. Polished tannins and a silken texture carry the wine to a long and memorable finish. GG/BOC

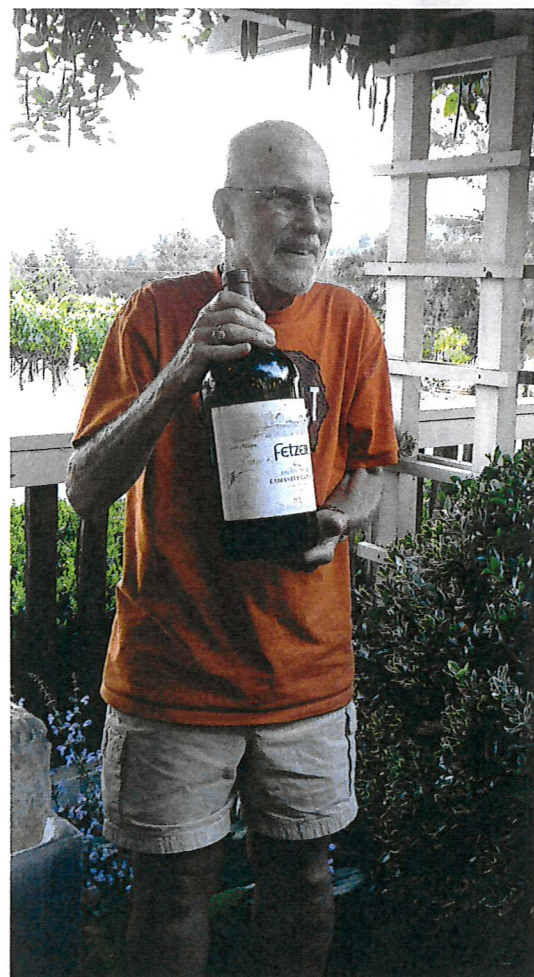
CAMPOVIDA WINES 2014 Chiarito Vineyard Nero d'Avola; Mendocino County, Calif.: Brimming with dark fruit on the nose, this is a prime rendition of new world Nero d'Avola. On the generous palate you'll find black plum, blackberry, and dusty cherry notes entwining with peppery elements and hints of vanilla spice, all supported by good acidity and a firm backbone of tannins. Smooth, balanced and enlivening with plenty of length. GG/BOC

POWICANA FARM 2015 Petite Sirah; Redwood Valley, Calif.: This complex Petite Sirah, which opens with a lovely fragrance of violets, comes from a biodynamically farmed (CCOF organic certified) vineyard. Concentrated and full-bodied in the mouth, intense tiers unfold, creating a delicious cornucopia of flavors: boysenberry, dark plum, blueberry cobbler, cassis, hints of earth, crushed white peppercorns, and nutmeg are framed by firm tannins. A fine example of power and finesse. GG/BOC

CAROL SHELTON WINES 2014 Wild Thing Old Vine Zinfandel; Mendocino County, Calif.: This classic example of America's sweetheart grape is juicy, jammy, and delightfully expressive. Boysenberry, plum, black cherry and raspberry jam at the core, with accents of fresh cracked peppercorns, a hint of tobacco leaf, and perfectly integrated oak (American and French oak barrel aging). The winning finish boasts a kiss of spice. GG/BOC

DESSERT

NAVARRO VINEYARDS 2016 Cluster Select Late Harvest Riesling; Anderson Valley, Calif.: From *Botrytis*-affected grapes comes this opulent elixir! It explodes on the palate with vivid layers of roasted nuts, honey, spice-accented poached pears, apricot pastry, chamomile, orange marmalade, and vanilla bean. Lavish yet finely balanced, with brisk acids complementing the rich fruit—and the finish just keeps on going. GG/BOC/Best of Show Dessert



[Photo by Ellen Landis]