

Wine Lovers Hit the Beach in Santa Barbara at the California Wine Festival, July 16-18

Set where State Street meets the sea in downtown Santa Barbara, the California Wine Festival is a three-day celebration of premium wines and gourmet foods July 16, 17 and 18. Now in its sixth year, the festival features hundreds of California's best red and white wines and live music complemented by dozens of top chefs, all in a sunny seaside setting.

"We're expecting a great festival this year," director Don Fritzen said. "We've rolled back our ticket prices to 2005 levels so our wine-loving guests can afford to come this year, bring their friends and have a wonderful time."

Organizers are expecting a wide variety of wineries to pour at the three events, representing every wine region in California, plus regional microbreweries, some imported wine representatives and even vodka and tequila tasting exhibitors. They are also working hard to attract the best local and regional restaurants and food purveyors. Of course, live music has been lined up at all three days' events to provide an exciting soundtrack to this outdoor extravaganza.

For 2009, a new evening of premium wine tasting, great food and music that reflects Santa Barbara's colonial roots has been added. "We wanted to create a new event that would appeal primarily to local wine lovers. The new event, called "Old Spanish Nights," will be held Thursday and will attract locals more than the weekend events," Kami Fritzen said.

"We think the old De La Guerra Adobe Courtyard is the perfect venue for this event," explained Don. "We wanted a location that would reflect the colorful history of Santa Barbara's Spanish roots. This venue is in the heart of the historic Spanish center of downtown Santa Barbara and will add an authentic look and feel to the theme."

Santa Barbara County wineries will be featured at the tasting



along with local restaurants and caterers who will supply Spanish-themed food samples," Kami added. Flashy flamenco dancers and traditional live Spanish music will provide the entertainment for this memorable evening.

"Old Spanish Nights is intentionally early in the evening," Don continued, "so we can promote dining out at local participating restaurants after the event. We're giving our guests discount coupons on wine to promote dining and 'wine-ing' at local restaurants during this tough year, especially those that support the California Wine Festival by pouring wine and giving away delicious food samples during the events."

Tickets are available at the festival website, www.CaliforniaWineFestival.com, at local wine shops, the Arlington Theater box office and Santa Barbara Axxess office.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

(NEW) Thursday, July 16, 5:30 to 8 p.m. – Old Spanish Nights

This is a celebration of local wines, foods and music true to Santa Barbara's Spanish roots. The historic De La Guerra Adobe Courtyard, site of the original Spanish fiestas in Santa Barbara, will provide the perfect setting for this exciting evening of wine and food festivities. Local and regional wineries will showcase their world-class wines accompanied by a spicy array of Spanish appetizers. Colorful Flamenco dancers, accompanied by Luna Gitana, a popular California Flamenco-Latin band will provide entertainment throughout the event. A wine and dine promotion encourages attendees to extend their evening by dining in Santa Barbara after the event.

Friday, July 17, 6:30 to 9 p.m. – Sunset Rare & Reserve Wine Tasting

Limited to just 400 lucky ticket holders, this is the toughest ticket in town. California's best winemakers dust off their rare and



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reserve level bottles in a wine lovers' fantasy night of sipping the 'GOOD STUFF!' Some wines being poured are no longer in distribution; some are proprietors' reserves and end-of-vintage wines. A champagne reception greets guests who may be treated to Napa trophy cabs, rare bottles from Sonoma, the Sierras, Central Coast, Santa Barbara County and more. Top regional chefs will serve hot and cold appetizers while live retro blues/jazz recording artists Donna Greene and the Roadhouse Daddies keep things super cool. The charming old-world carousel at Chase Palm Park Plaza provides the backdrop for this romantic summer night under the stars.

Saturday, July 18, 1 to 4 p.m. – Beachside Food & Wine Fest

This ever-popular event has become a midsummer tradition in Santa Barbara and gets underway at 11:30 a.m. for VIP and Gold Pass holders and 1 p.m. for regular ticket holders. Thousands of wine lovers will hit the sun-splashed beachside location for a day of sun, wine, food and music. Literally hundreds of premium California wines are served up along with the best of the regional microbreweries, local top chefs and food purveyors and vendors of all things related to wine.

Tickets are available starting as low as \$39 (Old Spanish Nights) and full-weekend passes are available on the festival website, www.CaliforniaWineFestival.com, at local wine shops, the Arlington Box Office and Santa Barbara Axxess office. For more information, contact Don Fritzen, (805) 637-4411.

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