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Beaulieu Vineyard 2009 Tapestry Reserve takes top honor in North Coast Wine Challenge



Judge Tim McDonald tastes wine during the first North Coast Wine Challenge at the Hilton Sonoma Wine Country Hotel in Santa Rosa on Wednesday, May 29, 2013.

BETH SCHLANKER / PD

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The ultimate winner in the first annual Press Democrat North Coast Wine Challenge, held last week in Santa Rosa, was the Beaulieu Vineyard 2009 Tapestry Reserve, a classic red Bordeaux blend.

Two dozen judges sifted through 930 wines in the blind tasting, then voted to find the best from throughout the heart of Wine Country. When their scores were tabulated, a total of 121 wines received gold medals, six won Best of County awards, five won Best of Class and the Beaulieu red was judged to be the biggest winner of all, the "Best of the Best."

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A classic red Bordeaux blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot, cabernet franc, malbec and petit verdot grapes, the Beaulieu red also received the “Best of Napa County” award and the Best of Class award for “Best Red.”

The Rutherford vineyard was established in 1900 by Georges de Latour and has served as a benchmark for Napa Valley cabernet sauvignon ever since. The wine garnered 98 points and inspired one judge to comment, “Please pour this over my naked body.”

“Best of Sonoma County” was a three-way tie for winner, among Sivas-Sonoma 2011 Sauvignon Blanc; Kokomo 2012 Grenache Rosé, Pauline's Vineyard Estate; and Trombetta Family Wine 2011 Pinot Noir, Gap's Crown Vineyard.

The Sivas-Sonoma 2011 Sauvignon Blanc, a wine produced by Don Sebastiani & Sons from Sonoma County grapes, also won Best of Class award for “Best White Wine.” It received 98 points and was described as “fragrant and extremely complex” by the judges.

The Kokomo 2012 Grenache Rosé, Pauline's Vineyard Estate, also won the Best of Class award for “Best Rosé,” garnering 98 points for being “elegantly made.”

The Trombetta Family Wine 2011 Pinot Noir, Gap's Crown Vineyard, sourced from vineyards in the Petaluma Gap region of the Sonoma Coast AVA, was deemed “soft, sultry, deep” by the judges, who gave it a score of 98.

Double win

The Navarro Vineyards 2012 Late Harvest Gewurztraminer won “Best of Mendocino County” and received 97 points for its “bright honeysuckle” flavors, perfect for outdoor sipping. It also won the Best of Class award for “Best Dessert” wine.

Shed Horn Cellars, 2010 Non Typical Red Blend, which combines zinfandel, cabernet sauvignon, petite sirah, barbera and syrah grapes, won the “Best of Lake County.” Judges awarded it 96 points, praising the Middletown winery's unusual red blend for its “bright, clean, good fruit.”

“Best of Marin County” went to the DeLoach Vineyards 2010 Marin Pinot Noir, a wine produced by Boisset Family Estates of St. Helena. The wine was sourced from four different vineyards in Marin County, one of the coolest American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) in California. The cool temperatures translate into a longer growing season, resulting in balanced wines with natural acidity.

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