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**FIRST-EVER TIE ANNOUNCED IN EAST MEETS WEST WINE CHALLENGE**

**Michigan Riesling and California Rosé Share Top Honors**

March 1, 2021 (Santa Rosa, Calif.) -- On a crisp midwinter day, 24 judges met to determine a winner in the International East Meets West Wine Challenge. For the first time in its storied history, two wines tied for top honors. A 2019 Bowers Harbor Vineyards Riesling (Michigan) took the top Eastern prize and a 2020 Trecini Rosé of Grenache was named Best of the West. In a direct face off, judges were equally impressed by both, and a tie was declared.

Founded in 1975, the International Eastern Wine Competition is the oldest competition still in existence. Eligible wines can come from Central and South America, Europe, Africa, Mexico (mainland), Canada (except British Columbia), and all U.S. states not listed below. The West Coast Wine Competition was established in 1982 and is open to wines from Australia, China, India, Japan, Middle East, New Zealand, Pacific Rim nations, Russia, Tasmania, British Columbia (Canada), Baja Mexico, and the U.S. states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.

Each competition is judged independently by experts familiar with the styles and varieties specific to each geographic region. Eight years ago, a final round was added, in which the top wines from each are pitted against each other in an East Meets West Taste Off.

A third competitive element, focused specifically on Riesling wines, gives the competition even more layers of intrigue. This year, the winner of the Riesling Challenge and the International Eastern competition were the same.

The 2019 Bowers Harbor Riesling (medium dry), sourced from Michigan’s Old Mission Peninsula AVA, garnered judges’ praise with “mango, pineapple and pear; impeccable balance; sweet and sour perfection — classic.” Trecini Cellars’ 2020 Rosé of Grenache, sourced from the Yolo County appellation in California, was described by judges as “strawberry lemonade; good acid; candy notes; citrus.”

“No other competition offers judges the opportunity to taste the best of both worlds,” said wine writer and educator Laura Ness, one of this year’s judges. “And in the end, to reach a tie between the Riesling from the East and the Grenache Rosé from the West illustrates how solid these wines are. This is such an unparalleled chance for wineries to obtain exposure on the national stage — and for consumers to discover something fresh, new, and noteworthy.”

“After a year of uncertainty and postponements, it was gratifying to conduct this important competition on time — and with so many more wines entered than last year,” commented Debra Del Fiorentino, owner of Wine Competitions Production & Management. Entries jumped an impressive 15 percent over 2020, a sign that wineries are eager to get back in the game.

The next WCMP competition is the Press Democrat North Coast Wine Challenge April 6-7, 2021. Deadline for entry is March 25. Go to www.winecompetitions.com for more information.

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