

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Russian River Vineyards Makes It A Double Header: Wins 2020 Experience Rosé Competition with Petite Sirah Rosé; Sweeps 2020 International Women's Wine Competition with 2016 Horseridge Vineyard Pinot Noir

Santa Rosa, Calif., —June 16, 2020— The results of the 2020 Experience Rosé and Women's International Wine Competitions are in, and winemaker Gio Balestreri of Russian River Vineyards, has a lot to celebrate. His 2019 Russian River Vineyards Petite Sirah Rosé, Fountaingrove, Sonoma County, beat out several hundred entries in the Rosé only competition to take Best of Show. The competition was held in Santa Rosa on Tuesday, June 9.

The following morning, at the Sweepstakes for the 2020 International Women's Wine Competition, Balestreri's 2016 Russian River Vineyards Horseridge Vineyard Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, swept to a commanding Best of Show win, with 13 votes out of a possible 20.

Originally scheduled to take place at the end of April at Bricoleur Vineyards in Windsor, the Experience Rosé Competition was delayed, along with many other such contests, by COVID-19. The competition had previously been held at the Soda Rock Winery, which was destroyed in the October 2019 Sonoma Wildfires.

"To have the Experience Rosé Competition delayed was unavoidable," said chief judge and competition owner, Debra Del Fiorentino, "It is the wineries who have really suffered from the impact of the COVID-imposed lockdown. We are grateful that so many chose to send us their wines, and are delighted to have awarded a healthy number of Double Gold and Gold medals, for a 24 percent Gold medal average. We know rosé season now lasts all year, and among our Best of Class winners, I believe there is truly something to please every palate."

The winning Russian River Vineyards 2019 Petite Sirah Rosé from the Wedge Family Vineyard in the Fountaingrove AVA, is a stunning color: sunset pink with a touch of blue. With aromas of flowers, red grapefruit and tangelo, it yields pomegranate, apple, blood orange, and ruby red grapefruit on the palate, with plenty of depth, grip and good length.

Best of Class (BOC) winners in the 2020 Experience Rosé Competition:

UrbanTree Cidery Rosé: Best Cider (Georgia)

W. Donaldson 2019 Rosé: Best Domestic Sparkling (Sonoma: Pinot Noir and Chardonnay)

Del Rio Vineyards 2019 Jolee Wines Rosé semi sparkling: Best Domestic Sweet (Oregon)

Très Chic/La Grand Courtage 2019 Très Chic Rose: Best International Dry (France)

Jean Philippe Moulin Champagne NV Rosé: Best International Sparkling (France)

Benziger Family Winery 2019 de Coelo Rosé (Sonoma Coast: Pinot Noir, biodynamic)

Cass Winery 2019 Oasis Rosé (Paso Robles: Mourvedre and Grenache)

Cellar Cru 2019 Rosé (California: Pinot Noir, Mourvedre, Carignan, Tempranillo)

New Clairvaux Vineyard 2019 Syrah Rosé: (California)

Belle Glos 2019 “Oeil de Perdrix” Pinot Noir Blanc (Sonoma County)

Halter Ranch 2019 Rosé (Paso Robles: Grenache)

Terra d'Oro 2019 Rosé (Amador: Grenache and Nebbiolo)

The 2020 International Women’s Wine Competition took place as planned, June 9 and 10, with a robust number of entries, given the impact of the pandemic. Taking Best of Show Sparkling was the NV Domaine Carneros by Taittinger *Cuvée de la Pompadour* Brut Rosé, which beat out the rival Bricoleur “Flying By The Seat of Our Pants” North Coast Sparkling Brut (made by Rack and Riddle from Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier), by a single vote.

The contest for Best White was a horse race between an excellent 2019 Pinot Gris and 2019 Riesling, both made by Navarro (Anderson Valley), a 2019 Bordeaux Blanc from Les Hautes de Lagarde (Bordeaux), a 2018 Viognier from Crux (Geyserville), a 2018 Sonoma Coast Chardonnay from Sonoma-Cutrer, and the winner, a seriously grassy and sassy 2019 Chloe Sauvignon Blanc from Marlborough, made by The Wine Group. In acclimation voting, the Sauvignon Blanc bested the Pinot Gris by three votes.

Navarro winemaker, Jim Klein, scored a Best of Show for his 2019 Pinot Noir Rosé from Anderson Valley, which beat out a biodynamically grown 2019 Biokult Zweigelt Rosé from Austria by a single vote.

Klein also went home with bragging rights for Best Dessert of Show for his Navarro Late Harvest Riesling.

Best of Show Cider went to Black Apple’s Cucumber Mint hard apple cider from Arkansas. Judges wrote in their notes, “It knocks your socks off.”

The Best Red fight pitted wines from all over the world, and included a Wakefield/Taylor's St. Andrews Shiraz from Clare Valley, Australia, a Tinta de Toro from Bodegas Familiares Matarromera, Spain, and a 2018 Holesinsky Malbec from Idaho. The label says, "Mile high wine by down to earth people."

The two top vote getters in the Best Red contest were the 2016 Russian River Vineyards Horseridge Pinot Noir and the 2018 "Sydney" Zinfandel from Wilson of Dry Creek. The Pinot won Best Red by one vote, and went on to be crowned Best of Show, handily besting the Best White, Best Dessert, Best Sparkling and Best Cider contenders in the final Sweepstakes round.

Other popular choices in the Best Red sweepstakes were the 2019 Le Douleur Exquise Grenache from Pays d'Oc, the 2017 Imagery Barbera (Cloverdale), a 2018 Merlot from Francis Ford Coppola Winery, the 2017 "The Conspirator" Cabernet Sauvignon from Oakville by Goldschmidt Vineyards, and the 2014 70s Love Wine Petite Sirah. Other choices garnering votes in the Best Red fight were the 2017 Imagery Cabernet Franc (Cloverdale) and the 2016 ONE HOPE Red Blend from the Adelaida district of Paso Robles, made by a Napa-based consortium dedicated to social causes and charities.

Diane Wilson, winemaker for Wilson Family Wines, was named Women Winemaker of the Year, for outstanding results at the competition.

Both competitions are owned and operated by Wine Competition Management & Productions, and were held at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds, following strict protocols set by the Sonoma County Health Department.

Winners will be listed on winecompetitions.com. Further coverage will also appear online at www.spiritedbiz.com and in a future issue of award-winning *Spirited* magazine, a nationally distributed adult beverage trade publication.

About Wine Competitions Management & Production (WCMP)

This organization owns and operates a variety of competitions including West Coast Wine Competition, International Eastern Wine Competition, East Meets West, International Women's Wine Competition, Harvest Challenge, the Craft Distillers Spirits Competition, Press Democrat North Coast Wine Challenge, and Experience Rosé. WCMP also manages the California Cider Competition and the Mendocino Apple Show International Cider Competition.

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