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TEXAS SOMMELIERS, WINE EXPERTS SELECT TOP LONE STAR WINES

AUSTIN, Texas – Feb. 22, 2011 – In the first-ever Texas Sommelier Tasting, nearly a dozen sommeliers and wine experts blind tasted more than 100 Texas wines to select their favorites that best represent Texas and its terroir. From Blanc du Bois grown in Coastal sandy soils to Mediterranean varieties like Tempranillo, Sangiovese and Vermentino that are flourishing in the High Plains, Texas is producing high-quality wines that appeal to a wide range of wine consumers.

“While Texas makes some outstanding Cabernet Sauvignons, Merlots and Chardonnays, winemakers across the Lone Star State are not afraid to introduce wine consumers to new wines well-suited for our climate and our Southwestern foods,” said Robert Champion, state coordinator of the Texas Department of Agriculture’s Wine Marketing Program.

The first in what will be an ongoing Texas Sommelier Tasting program, the blind tasting was designed to provide a snapshot of wines consumers can look forward to tasting this year in winery tasting rooms or when purchased at retailers and restaurants. The tasting took place in Austin on Jan. 17.

“This tasting showed the strength of the Texas wine industry and how well Mediterranean varieties are doing,” said Drew Hendricks, MS, director of beverage education and wine for the Houston-based Pappas Restaurant Group and one of the sommelier tasters. “There are many new and exciting wineries as well.”

“The list of wines below provides a great start to finding the perfect Texas wine for any meal, cheese or dessert pairing. There are many Texas award-winning wines that you might enjoy,” Champion said. “Your best bet is to try Texas wines for yourself and see what you like.”

Here are the favorites among the wine professionals:

Chardonnay

Llano Estacado, 2009 Unoaked Chardonnay
Fall Creek Vineyards, 2009 Chardonnay

Viognier

Lone Oak Winery, 2010 Viognier
Brennan Vineyards, 2009 Viognier

Blanc du Bois

Haak Vineyards and Winery, 2010 Dry Blanc du Bois
Lone Oak Winery, 2010 Blanc du Bois
Enoch’s Stomp, 2009 Off-Dry Blanc du Bois
Haak Vineyards and Winery, 2010 Semi-Sweet Blanc du Bois

Pinot Grigio

Texas Hills Vineyard, 2008 Pinot Grigio

Riesling

Bell Mountain Vineyards, 2007 Late Harvest Riesling

Other Whites

Duchman Family Winery, 2009 Vermentino

Llano Estacado, 2009 Viviana

Landon Winery, 2010 Gewurztraminer

Rosé

Driftwood Estate Winery, 2010 Dry Rosé

McPherson Cellars, 2009 Rosé of Syrah

Messina Hof Wine Cellars, 2010 Sophia Marie Rosé

Rhone and Bordeaux Blends

Becker Vineyards, 2009 Prairie Rotie

Inwood Estates Vineyards, 2006 Magellan

Messina Hof Wine Cellars, 2006 Paulo Bordeaux Blend

Merlot

Grape Creek Vineyards, 2008 Merlot

Pedernales Cellars, 2008 Merlot

Syrah

Brennan Vineyards, 2007 Syrah

Petite Syrah

Torre di Pietra Vineyards, 2008 Petite Syrah

Tempranillo/Tempranillo Blends

Inwood Estates Vineyards, 2008 Cornelius

Inwood Estates Vineyards, 2007 Tempranillo-Cabernet

Pedernales Cellars, 2008 Tempranillo

Red Caboose Winery and Vineyard, 2007 Tempranillo

La Buena Vida Vineyards-Springtown, 2005 Smith Estate Tempranillo

Cabernet Sauvignon

Crump Valley Vineyards, 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon

Brennan Vineyards, 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon

Kiepersol Estates Winery, 2007 Texas Cabernet Sauvignon

Red Blends

Brushy Creek Vineyards, NV Trois Amis

Pedernales Cellars, 2008 Kuhlken Vineyards Reserve

Red Caboose Winery and Vineyard, 2008 Lenoir/Tempranillo

Sandstone Cellars, 2009 X

Llano Estacado, 2007 Viviano

Fall Creek Vineyards, 2006 Meritus

Other Reds

Duchman Family Winery, 2009 Dolcetto

Duchman Family Winery, 2009 Montepulciano

Messina Hof Wine Cellars, 2009 Private Reserve Cabernet Franc

Sandstone Cellars, 2009 VII

Dessert/Port

Enoch's Stomp, 2009 Sweet Lenoir

Grape Creek Vineyards, NV Port

Pleasant Hill Winery, NV Tawny Rosso Forte

Texas Hills Vineyard, 2008 Moscato

Stone House Vineyard, NV Scheming Beagle Port

McPherson Cellars, NV Chansa Solera Reserva Sherry

Enoch's Stomp, 2009 Ellen's Sweet Song

With more than 215 wineries, Texas is the fifth-largest wine producing state and seventh-largest grape producer. For more information about Texas wine, go to

www.gotexanwine.org.

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