



WINE CONNOISSEURS GIVE TEXAS WINES HIGH MARKS AT FIRST-EVER “VIRTUAL” BLIND TASTING



AUSTIN - April 7, 2009 – Rip off the labels, click on the Internet and get ready for a whole new way of testing Texas wines. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) today announced it successfully hosted its first-ever “virtual” blind wine tasting called the “Texas Two-Sip Tele-Tasting.” Taking its popular Texas Two-Sip Tasting to the Web, TDA invited a handful of journalists and wine bloggers to participate in this blind tasting of Texas wines against comparable non-Texas wines.

“The Texas wines showed beautifully against the comparable non-Texas wines,” Craig Collins, regional sales manager with Prestige Cellars said. “Our technical tasting format looked objectively at color, smell and taste of each wine, and the Texas wines certainly stood their ground against some of the best wines in the world, if not surpassing them.”

The Texas Two-Sip Tele-Tasting featured emerging signature varietals from Texas including Viognier, red Rhone blends, Sangiovese, Tempranillo and Orange Moscato. The first-ever virtual tasting is an extension of the ongoing Texas Two-Sip Tastings conducted in person around the state, where Texas wines are tasted against well-known, iconic wines from around the world.

“We host Texas Two-Sip blind tasting comparisons as a way to avoid any preconceived biases or ideas about Texas wines and to demonstrate how well Texas wines show against other highly respected wines,” Bobby Champion Jr, coordinator of the TDA wine marketing program said. “The Texas Two-Sip Tele-Tasting provides a new avenue to reach journalists and bloggers without the time and expense of travel and scheduling. We want to expose Texas wines to wine experts around the country and the Texas Two-Sip Tele-Tasting allows us to do this virtually.”

The virtual taste-test was hosted by sommeliers Devon Broglie, associate team leader in the wine department at Whole Foods Market, and Craig Collins, regional sales manager with Prestige Cellars. Broglie was named Texas’ Best Sommelier for 2006 by The Texas Sommelier Association and Collins was first runner-up behind Broglie.

The host sommeliers selected the Texas and comparable non-Texas wines to feature, choosing wines with signature varietal characteristics and similar price points. Featured wines in the March 31 Texas Two-Sip Tele-Tasting included:

- Brennan Viognier 2008 and Yalumba Eden Valley Viognier 2007
- Llano Signature Melange 2007 and La Vieille Ferme Rouge 2006
- McPherson Sangiovese 2006 and Badia Coltibuono Chianti Classico 2006
- Inwood Cornelious Tempranillo 2007 and Pesquera Tinto Ribera del Duero 2005
- Texas Hills Orange Moscato 2005 and Quady Electra Orange Muscat 2007

Participants watched a 40-minute Tele-Tasting Webcast, where Broglie and Collins provided technical analysis of each wine. During the Webcast, participants could submit questions and comments via chat. Following the Webcast, TDA hosted a teleconference, where participants asked questions and provided feedback on the wines and the Tele-Tasting.

TDA has hosted in-person Texas Two-Sip Tastings for the past two years at various events, including the Texas Sommelier Conference, the Austin360 Food and Wine Bloggers Conference at Whole Foods Market, trade tastings and during media visits.

Go to <http://www.youtube.com/user/GoTexanWine> to watch the Texas Two-Sip Tele-Tasting, and visit <http://www.gotexanwine.org/mediaguide/mediakit.html#stories> to review the tasting notes from this Texas Two-Sip Tele-Tasting.

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