

Taste of Tulalip 2009

Tulalip Resort Casino, a AAA Four Diamond resort destination located forty minutes north of Seattle, hosted its first annual Taste of Tulalip last weekend, November 14 and 15. More than 500 people attended the two-day celebration of Pacific Northwest wine, food and tradition.

Saturday evening began with a Champagne Reception during which guests of the Celebration Dinner sampled a variety of hors d'oeuvres and mingled with resort executives and fellow wine and food enthusiasts. Guests were then invited to take their seats in order to receive a welcome gift of traditional song and dance given by the Tulalip Tribes' Canoe Family, followed by an invocation from Tulalip Tribes board member and historian Tony Hatch, recited first in the Tulalip Tribes' native language of Lushootseed, and repeated in English. Following the invocation, Q13 FOX News anchor Mark Wright, who served as emcee for the evening, introduced Brett Magnan, executive vice president of Tulalip Resort Casino, who gave welcome remarks to all of the guests. Magnan presented a \$5,000 check benefiting the Hibulb Cultural Center and Natural History Preserve to Tulalip Tribes chairman Mel Sheldon Jr. and special projects manager Patti Gobin, who sit on the Board of Trustees for the Tulalip Foundation, an organization dedicated to empowering the well being of the Tulalip community by helping to meet charitable cultural, scientific, health and educational needs. Proceeds for the donation were raised by the sales of Taste of Tulalip raffle and event tickets.

The multi-course dinner was prepared and presented by Executive Chef Perry Mascitti's culinary team and paired with Washington wines hand selected by Tulalip Resort Casino's award winning sommelier Tommy Thompson. It began with Avocado-Crab Timbale, featuring Dungeness crab, avocado, mango, blood orange sauce and chive oil paired with Hudson Shah Viognier. A Chanterelle Mushroom Sweet Potato Corn Chowder En Croûte was then paired with McCrea Cellars Roussanne, followed by Duck Prosciutto with candied macerated pear and savory micro greens paired with DeLille Cellars D2. Next, a Miso Seared Black Cod with soy ginger reduction and cucumber Namasu was paired with JM Cellars Longevity, followed by an Intermezzo of blue cheese, apple, walnut and fig. Guests then indulged in a daring Trio of Game featuring Venison Tenderloin Wellington with chanterelle pumpkin puree, Wild Boar Tenderloin with rice spring roll and cranberry apple glaze and Rabbit Tenderloin with butternut squash, sweet potato and blackberry sauce. The trio course was paired with two varietals, the Nicholas Cole 'Reserve' Red and Dunham Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon. A sweet ending of Spiced Pumpkin Cake accompanied by pumpkin seed brittle, milk chocolate and mousse parfait and paired with Northwest Totem Cellars Late Harvest Viognier completed the dining experience.

Throughout the evening, winemakers including Greg Lille from DeLille Cellars, John Bigelow from JM Cellars and Mike Neuffer from Nicholas Cole Cellars, and others from wineries represented at the dinner regaled guests with descriptions of their featured wines. In addition, executive producer Kevin Whelan and contestant Stephanie Hervey from the PBS reality television series "The Winemakers" served as keynote speakers and entertained guests with their unique experiences fusing the best of wine knowledge, ambition and reality television in to a compelling program for viewers. Following dinner, guests were invited to a VIP after party with live entertainment by Darrius Willrich, cigars provided by Aficionado magazine and libations sponsored by Graham's Port.

Sunday's events in the Orca Ballroom included wine education and lifestyle seminars including "Chocolate and Wine," where attendees learned the principles of pairing wine and chocolate presented by Seattle Chocolatier Neil Campbell. Wine Spectator's Gwendolyn Wilson Osborn also presented two seminars, including "Around the World in Washington" and "The ABC's of Wine Tasting...And Then Some." Guests had the opportunity to taste the raw components of Cabernet and Syrah wines and create their own blend in a seminar hosted by Kevin Sass of JUSTIN Winery. Master of Wine Joel Butler, presented "Washington Wine Growing: The Elements that Make Our Wines World Class," allowing guests to taste five wines from Washington's founding winery. Following the seminars, a Noon luncheon featured a spirited panel discussion comparing the Red Mountain and the Paso Robles American Viticultural Area (AVA). Participants in the panel discussion included Kevin Sass of JUSTIN Winery and Patricia Gelles of KlipSun Vineyards.

The highlight of the weekend was Sunday's tasting event featuring more than 60 participating Washington wineries that poured samples for attendees, along with culinary samplings from Tulalip Resort Casino's top chefs including Chef Dean Shinagawa of Tulalip Bay, Pastry Chef Nikol Nakamura and Chef David Buchanan of Blackfish. Throughout the day the property's chefs presented cooking demonstrations of some of their favorite dishes including Chef John Jadamec's Oven-roasted Pork Loin with honey mango mandarin pepper salsa and Chef Brent Clarkson's exotic fruit relishes. Attendees were also given the opportunity to participate in the Crossfire Challenge, an event hosted by PBS reality television series "The Winemakers" allowing individuals to test their wine knowledge. Throughout the day's festivities, raffle prizes were given away including a football signed by Seattle Seahawks Quarterback Matt Hasselbeck and wine kits.