Taste Washington Toasts Another Fruitful Year

Record number of attendees, wineries, restaurants and celebrity chefs concoct recipe for success

SEATTLE – Taste Washington, Seattle’s premier wine and food event, reported its highest overall attendance in 2016; both in event participants, and also for participating restaurants and wineries. The 19th annual event took place March 31-April 3 at various venues throughout Seattle and the region and drew more than 6,400 people over the course of four days.

Taste Washington 2016 by the numbers:

- Overall attendance: 6,439
- Grand Tasting attendance: 5,258
- Wineries at Grand Tasting: 237
- Wines poured: 700
- Number of oysters shucked: 575 dozen

The annual event’s continued growth and success can be attributed to each year’s new and exciting series of events celebrating the state’s renowned artisans and vintners, from exclusive cocktail-style parties to unique epicurean excursions and educational seminars. This year, Taste Washington introduced the first ever Best Bite award at the Grand Tasting. Participants were able to vote for their favorite culinary bite from one of the 66 Pacific Northwest restaurants, 19 of which were new this year. The inaugural winner, out of more than 2,100 votes, was Swiftwater Cellars’ duck confit on a wonton chip, topped with an Asian plum sauce.

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The weekend kicked off with a beautiful Seattle sunset and red and white cocktail attire at the third annual Red & White Party at AQUA by El Gaucho featuring exclusive pours from 25 wineries. In its second year, Taste Washington on the Farm boasted three epicurean, interactive excursions allowing participants to get mud on their boots and learn more about Washington’s farm-to-table culinary culture. Designed for up-and-coming wine enthusiasts, The New Vintage served up cocktail-party vibes with eight celebrity chef stations, 45 wineries, DJ Tina T and a rosé lounge. This year’s educational seminars, led by panels of top wine critics and sommeliers, included in-depth and interactive discussion of topics ranging from King Cab! to Riesling on the Rise.

The Alaska Airlines Chef’s Stage brought celebrity chefs and special guests including Chef Thierry Rautureau, known as the Chef in the Hat which drew large crowds for live cooking demonstrations. This year’s demonstrations were led by Chef Ryan Burnett of Muckleshoot Casino, Chef Jason Stratton of Mamnoon, Chef Aarti Sequeira Host of Food Network’s Aarti Party, Food & Wine’s Best New Chef in 2012 Chef Jenn Louis of Lincoln Restaurant + Sunshine Tavern, Chef Sarah Scott of El Gaucho Bellevue, Brad Robinson of Stella Artois and Chef Debi Hernandez of Crisp Creperie food truck.

Taste Washington is produced by Visit Seattle in partnership with Washington State Wine. To learn more, visit www.tastewashington.org.

About Taste Washington:
Taste Washington is the largest single-region wine and food event in the United States, featuring more than 225 Washington State wineries and more than 65 Pacific Northwest restaurants. The 19th annual event will be held on March 31- April 3 at various locations in Seattle. The 2016 Taste Washington welcoming sponsor is Alaska Airlines; the event feature is Stella Artois; the premier sponsors are Alaska Airlines Visa Signature Card, Albert Lee Appliance, AQUA by El Gaucho, Muckleshoot Casino, Seattle Met and Total Wine & More; the magnum sponsors are Fonté Coffee Roaster and Jaguar Seattle; and the patron sponsors are Visit Walla Walla, Voya Financial Advisors, Peninsula Truck Lines, Portland Monthly, So Delicious and Chef Works. The specialty feature is Michelle Sparkling. Taste Washington attracts almost 5,500 wine and food enthusiasts to the Seattle area. The Washington State Wine Commission launched Taste Washington in 1998 and is now produced by Visit Seattle. For more information, visit www.tastewashington.org.

About Visit Seattle:
Visit Seattle, a private, nonprofit marketing organization, has served as Seattle/King County’s official destination marketing organization (DMO) for more than 50 years. The goal of these marketing efforts is to enhance the employment opportunities and economic prosperity of the region. For more information, visit www.visitseattle.org.

About Washington State Wine:
Washington State Wine represents every licensed winery and wine grape grower in Washington State. Guided by an appointed board, WSW provides a marketing platform to raise positive
awareness of the Washington State wine industry and generate greater demand for its wines. Funded almost entirely by the industry through assessments based on grape and wine sales, WSW is a state government agency, established by the legislature in 1987. To learn more, visit www.washingtonwine.org.

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