

## Lake County wines have strong showing in Chronicle wine competition

Contributed by Susan Stout  
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SAN FRANCISCO &ndash; Lake County wines won nearly 80 awards this year at the prestigious San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, with approximately 50 of the top medals going to Lake County Winery Association members.

The annual San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition is touted as the &ldquo;largest competition of American wines in the world.&rdquo;

The 2010 event concluded Jan. 8 following five days of tasting and evaluating 4,913 entries, a world record number, according to the event&rsquo;s Web site.

&ldquo;We are ecstatic to learn that Lake County wines and wineries stood out among the 4,900 entries,&rdquo; said Monica Rosenthal, executive director of the Lake County Winery Association. &ldquo;It helps distinguish Lake County as a premier winegrape producing region. We know we have excellent grapes and wine, but it is especially nice to get that recognition from panels of professional judges ranking entries in such a renowned competition.&rdquo; Members of the Lake County Winery Association receiving bronze, silver, and gold medals for their wines are Bell Hill Vineyards, Brassfield Estate Winery, Dusinberre Cellars, Gregory Graham Wines, Noggle Vineyards & Winery, Red Lava Vineyards, Rosa d&rsquo;Oro Vineyards, Shannon Ridge Vineyard & Winery, Shed Horn Cellars, Six Sigma Ranch and Winery, Tulip Hill Winery and Wildhurst Vineyards.

Gold medal winning Lake County wines produced by association members include: Brassfield Estate&rsquo;s 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$50-\$59.99) and its 2008 Sauvignon Blanc (\$14-\$19.99), Gregory Graham&rsquo;s 2008 Sauvignon Blanc (\$14-\$19.99) and 2008 Riesling, Rosa d&rsquo;Oro&rsquo;s 2007 Sangiovese, Shannon Ridge Winery&rsquo;s 2008 Chardonnay (\$20-\$24.99) and 2008 Sauvignon Blanc (\$14-\$19.99), Sol Rouge&rsquo;s 2007 Syrah (\$25-\$29.99) and Wildhurst Vineyards&rsquo; 2007 Merlot (\$15-\$19.99).

Other wineries receiving gold medals for Lake County wines include VIE Winery, which captured gold with its 2008 Lake County Roussanne, and Robledo Family Winery which received a gold for its 2007 Lake County Tempranillo.

Awarded the highest honor among all the Lake County wines entered, Obsidian Ridge Vineyard&rsquo;s 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon was selected as Best of Class and Judges&rsquo; Choice in its category (Cabernet Sauvignon \$25-\$29.99). It was one of six Cabernet Sauvignons selected as Judges&rsquo; Choice winners, qualifying it for the Sweepstakes Round.

The win &ldquo;comes on the heels of a tough year for us,&rdquo; said Peter Molnar, partner and general manager at Obsidian Ridge. &ldquo;It shows that we have what it takes in Lake County to produce a really good Cabernet.&rdquo; Molnar was &ldquo;particularly happy,&rdquo; he said, because it was a 2007 that was &ldquo;just released.&rdquo; He described the wine as one made from small berries with intense flavors. He emphasized that the honor indicates that for Lake County&rsquo;s wines &ldquo;recognition is happening.&rdquo; Obsidian Ridge also received an award for its 2007 Lake County Syrah.

Awards were presented to the following Lake County wineries and wineries that produce wines from Lake County grapes: Beaver Creek Vineyards, Bell Cellars, Big Valley, Bonterra Vineyards, Charles Creek Vineyard, Dacalier, Fortress Vineyards, Imagery Estate Winery, Main Street, Matchbook, McDermaid Family Vineyard, Sunce Winery and Zina Hyde Cunningham.

Two Lake County wineries were the recipients of Double Gold awards. Double Gold indicates a unanimous Gold choice by the judges in any particular category. Double Gold awards were presented to Robledo Family Winery for its 2006 Los Carneros Pinot Noir (\$40-\$49.99 category) and to Sol Rouge for its 2007 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (over \$60 category).

Winning entries in each category can be found on the competition website, [www.winejudging.com](http://www.winejudging.com). Tickets for the public tasting portion of the event may be purchased online.

The public&rsquo;s opportunity to taste entries from the competition is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 20, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., at the Fort Mason Center in San Francisco. Tickets are \$60 per person in advance and \$80 per person at the door.

For more information about the Lake County Winery Association, visit the association&rsquo;s Web site, [www.lakecountywineries.org](http://www.lakecountywineries.org) or contact Monica Rosenthal at [monica@lakecountywineries.org](mailto:monica@lakecountywineries.org).

Information about Lake County winegrapes and vineyards may be found at [www.lakecountywinegrape.org](http://www.lakecountywinegrape.org), on the Lake County Winegrape Commission Web site or contact Shannon Gunier at [shannong@lakecountywinegrape.org](mailto:shannong@lakecountywinegrape.org). Follow Lake County News on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/LakeCoNews> and on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Lake-County-News/143156775604?ref=mf>.