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Indiana State Fair 'Indy International' wine competition harvests another great year

The Indiana State Fair Wine Competition, often referred to as Indy International, judged another record number of entries this past week. This year's entries climbed to 2,309 an increase of seven percent over the 1998 competition. "The growth the competition experienced again this year is a tribute to the efforts and expertise of many Purdue University specialists in the computer and wine areas," says Ellen Harkness, competition coordinator and wine technician at Purdue. "Especially the hard work and dedication of Dr. Vine, the competition chairman, whose reputation offers particular credibility to the Indy International".

Entries flowed in from 14 different countries, making the Indy International one of the five largest competitions in the nation. In addition to the United States and European entries, New Zealand, Hungary, Chile, and Australia all entered wines this year, further diversifying the selection at this wine extravaganza.

Overall, 1,778 wines earned the status of Indy International award winners by winning 248 gold, 718 silver, and 812 bronze medals. Top honors and the American Airlines best of show trophy were awarded to Barwang Winery from New South Wales, Australia for their 1996 Winemakers Reserve Shiraz. Best commercial red wine honors went to Quatro Winery of Oakville, California for their Sonoma County Cabernet Sauvignon 1997. Venezia Chardonnay 1997 produced by Geyser Peak in Geyserville, California took home best commercial white wine honors.

Huber Orchard & Winery of Borden, Indiana, won the Indiana's Governor's Cup, the highest award for an Indiana winery, for the fourth consecutive year. Huber's winemaker, Ted Huber, was also honored with the Commercial Fruit Wine National Champion award for his Indiana grown blackberry hard apple cider.

The Indiana State Fair wine competition is chaired by Dr. Richard Vine, a Purdue University enologist and the man who brought the state fair wine competition from a regional event of 484 wines to the international extravaganza it is today. Entries have increased over 475% since Dr. Vine became involved and the competition is recognized worldwide for its professional reputation and quality judging.

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"Our standards are high and medals are difficult to earn," say Vine, "which is the main reason the competition attracts so many entries from around the world." For two and one half days, 45 judges served on nine tasting panels, evaluating each wine sip by sip, glass by glass. Placement is by consensus, and differences of opinion are settled by debate, which can be spirited.

People who want to taste some of the top Hoosier wines can attend the “Taste of Indiana Agriculture,” at the Indiana State Fair Farm Bureau Building on Thursday, August 5. The event costs \$15 and attendees receive an etched wineglass, a recipe book, and the chance to sample Indiana wine and food from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. A silent auction will be introduced this year, including donations of classic wines from Dr. Vine and gift baskets, winery tours, and wine donations from Indiana wineries. Tickets are available at the door, local Ticket Master outlets or through the Indiana State Fair ticket office at (317) 927-1482.

NOTE TO JOURNALISTS: The result pamphlet is attached. For questions or additional information, please contact Sally Peart, Indiana Wine Grape Council Marketing Director, at (765) 496-3842.

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