



By Kimberly Flowers

Have you ever attended a food and wine event in Sonoma County that focused almost exclusively on small producers? You know, the wine labels that have little or no marketing budgets, or specialty purveyors that produce food products on their own farm? What about local artists with big talent, but little exposure?

Well now's your chance to experience some of our area's finest wine, food and art outside the confines of a winery tasting room, restaurant, retail shop or art gallery.

Artisano 2011, now in its third year, is more than just a predictable wine country event. It showcases the talents of our region's entrepreneurs and artisans while benefiting the outstanding programs supported by Slow Food Sonoma County, North.

Marketing Small Scale Artisans

Artisano is the brainchild of Cloverdale couple, Mark and Sue Tharrington. With a professional background in event sponsorship and management, Mark is always looking to create unique local events. Sue, is a culinary whiz. Both are self-described foodies and wine lovers. Over dinner one night, they started brainstorming what would become Artisano.

"We wanted to create an event that would serve as a platform for the little guy," says Tharrington. "Lots of our friends own and operate food, wine or artistic micro-businesses -- we wanted to create an opportunity for them to share and promote their products and generate a local, loyal following," he added.

Mark talked with small wine producers and speciality food business owners, as well as local painters, sculptors, glass fusion and other artisans. The positive response resulted in Artisano 2009, held at The Geyserville Inn.

Building on Success

The inaugural event received outstanding reviews, not only from the guests, but from the participants. The North Bay Bohemian's BohoBlog said, "...Artisano is destined to be hugely popular -- and why shouldn't it be? Small-production cult wines rarely enjoyed by the public, married with gorgeous food from local purveyors in a hidden setting on a stellar fall day."

Now, two years later, the event has morphed into a two-day affair, November 18 and 19 at The Vintners Inn in Santa Rosa. By partnering with The Vintners Inn, Tharrington is able to include more artisans, vendors and guests, and add two dinner events -- all in a celebration of the local, small and handcrafted."

Slow Food Programs Benefit

One of the best outcomes of Artisano is the beneficiary -- Slow Food of Sonoma County, North (SFSCN).

"The Slow Food philosophy is exactly what Sue and I had in mind as we were brainstorming possible beneficiaries of Artisano," said Tharrington.

Slow Food originated in Italy in 1989 to counter the rise of fast food and fast life. It now has over 100,000 members in 150 countries. Visit www.slowfood.com for more.

Locally, SFSCN supports and promotes local farmers and their products. They created the **Slow Harvest Gleaning Project** -- moving food from west county farms and gardens, to local organizations that need food. They also created **Slow Food in Schools**, a partnership with eight local elementary schools designed to create and maintain their own school garden. Both programs benefit from Artisano.

Event Details

Artisano 2011 kicks off with a Winemaker Dinner at John Ash & Co. on Friday night, November 18. Executive Chef Tom Schmidt will create a five-course seasonal meal paired with local wines produced by five local wine producers.

Saturday afternoon's Grand Tasting at The Vintners Inn will feature small wine producers, speciality food purveyors and artists, and local restaurants serving small gourmet plates with meat ingredients donated by Sonoma Direct (meat distributor for our local ranches). The Tasting also includes several chef demonstrations, live music, Susan Comstock Swingtet, a raffle and auction. That night, a casual family-style Harvest Dinner for will be held at the John Ash & Co.

For the complete event schedule, participants and ticket info, visit www.artisano.org. For info about Slow Food, visit slowfoodsonomacounty.org.

Every Saturday
FREE Beer Tasting
1 to 4 PM

Tuesday Night: Choose from two classic pastas with an artisan salad only \$9

Wednesday Night: Center-Cut pork loin, grilled and topped with apple-mint glaze, herbed rice pilaf, seasonal vegetables & side salad only \$12

Brunch: Sunday 10am to 4pm
Lunch: Tues. - Sat. 11am to 3pm
Dinner: Tues. - Sat. 5pm to 8pm
Afternoon Tea:
First Monday of every month

(707) 829-2141 Reservations Recommended
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