

Summer and wine at Saint Mary's College was a perfect pairing



Summer Wine Festival at SMC

Photo Vera Kochan

By Vera Kochan

Anyone who missed attending the 15th annual Summer Wine Festival at Saint Mary's College should mark their calendars for next year. The Aug. 10 event was hosted by the SMC Alumni Association

with proceeds benefiting the Lasallian Legacy Scholarship Fund created in the late 1980s by the Alumni Association Board of Directors.

According to Senior Director of Alumni Engagements Courtney Lohmann, the event has

raised over \$195,000 for the endowment to date, providing scholarships for more than 30 students by supplementing one-fourth of their tuition during their four years of school.

The event was held in the entire Soda Center building

and wine tastings were poured by 25-30 vendors, many of whom are SMC alumni.

More than half of the wineries participating were members of the 'Gaels in Wine' alumni chapter, who are Saint Mary's alumni who work in the wine industry – in many cases, own and/or operate wineries, noted Lohmann.

Napa vintner Michael Pozzan Winery's Matthew Pozzan (an alumni) proudly stated that his parents (founders Michael and Mary Ann) were also SMC alums.

Another Napa winery, Smith Devereux, began in 2011 with partners Steve Smith, John Truchard and Ian Devereux White. White graduated from SMC with an MBA. After a career writing for Lonely Planet he wanted to try his hand at winemaking.

Other offerings for the guests included a wine pull, a wine lover's version of a grab bag, where for \$20 a lucky person could walk away with an \$80 bottle of wine. A Silent

Auction included weekend getaways, wine tastings, gourmet olive oil and Gaels gift baskets and swag.

Former SMC president Brother Mel Anderson, FSC, said, "I've been to almost every one of these. When it first started, it was in front of the theater. There was an Italian group that used to sing and entertain the crowds. It's an informal occasion for wine tasting."

Entertaining the crowd this year was the Ali and Mark Band, a local acoustic duo specializing in rock, blues and soul. They have performed throughout Lamorinda, Walnut Creek, the wine country and more. Patio seating was provided for diners to relax al fresco while enjoying a buffet of gourmet appetizers and desserts.

While the afternoon drew many SMC alumni, Assistant Vice President of Alumni and Community Engagement Mary Poppingo noted that "this event is not just for SMC people – it's a community event."

2019 Lamorinda Idol finalists delight audience at Orinda Theatre

By Sora O'Doherty

A happy audience was lavish with their applause at the 2019 Lamorinda Idol competition finals on Aug. 18. Contestants came from local schools and the event was organized by the Lamorinda Arts Council, with the support of community sponsor the Orinda Community Foundation and local sponsors, including this publication.

The winners were as follows: Grades K-2 Soloists: Cara Impallomeni, "Maybe"; Grades 3-5 Soloists: Margaret Meckes, "Blue Bayou"; Grades 6-8 Soloists: Mina Lim, "To Love You More"; and Grades 9-12 Soloists: Valentina Navarro-Marsili, "Rise Up". The Group winners were: Grades K-5: The O'Meara Sisters, "Ain't No Mountain High Enough"; Grades 6-8: 4 O'Clock, "Titanium"; and Grades 9-12: Kiera & Elizabeth, "Dusty Trails." Ava Jacuzzi won the Audience Award for her performance of "Desperado."

Although there were thanks all around for organizers, volunteers, and parents, no one garnered more gratitude than Lamorinda Idol Chairman Steve Harwood.



Margaret Meckes won grades 3-5 soloist with her rendition of "Blue Bayou"



Mina Lim was delighted to win Best Soloist, Grades 6-8 with her performance of "To Love You More"



Valentina Navarro-Marsili won Best Soloist Grades 9-12 with her performance of "Rise Up"



First-grader Cara Impallomeni won with her performance of "Maybe"

Photos Sora O'Doherty

Pacific Chamber Orchestra season opens Sept. 14 in Lafayette



Photos provided

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March 22 in Lafayette and March 23 in Livermore brings "The Passionate-Piazzolla's Four Seasons of Buenos Aries." Until you have experienced Piazzolla's The Four Seasons, you haven't really lived. Your heart will probably beat to a different drum when he is done, and you will be better for it. On the program also: Telemann's spritely Concerto for Oboe d'amore with Robin May soloist, Shostakovich's Two Pieces for String Octet, a wistful beginning to a dramatic homage

to a dear friend lost that turns on a dime to humor, then moodiness, into delicacy, showcasing the vast range of musical emotional expression, Vivaldi's Concerto for Four Violins a tour de force of three intense virtuoso movements that ripple like the sea. The program journeys into baroque exuberance, modern Slavic flair and the passionate nuevo tango. If you can go where words cannot, you will be glad for the invitation.

The Pacific Chamber Orchestra season concludes May 2 in Lafayette and May 3 in

Livermore with "The Exquisite-Bach's Brandenburg Concertos." Pacific Chamber Orchestra presents all six Brandenburg Concertos in one concert. A rare treat indeed. It has been said that Bach's Brandenburg Concertos display the buoyant side of his 'imperishable genius' because they were written during one of the happiest and most productive periods of his life. Bach in these six

complementary works stretched the definition of concerto forevermore by exploring all kinds of solo combinations and in the process invented the now familiar modern keyboard concerto. This require virtuoso musicians willing to push through the edges of their instruments – and feel exhilarated doing it. No matter how many times you've heard these pieces, you feel you've heard something different each

time you encounter them. The members of the Pacific Chamber Orchestra also appear in such prestigious groups as the San Francisco Symphony, Opera and Ballet Orchestras, touring Broadway shows, and feature films recorded at Skywalker Ranch. They are touring soloists and chamber musicians.



Lawrence Kohl

Season subscriptions and single tickets for individual concerts are available at: www.PacificChamberOrchestra.org For ticket information: www.PacificChamberOrchestra.org

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