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Lamorinda vintner receives coveted wine competition awards

By Vera Kochan



Bill Scanlin proudly holds Deer Hill Vineyards' award winning wines. Photo Vera Kochan

Lamorinda Wine Growers Association President Bill Scanlin's Lafayette-based Deer Hill Vineyards was awarded a Bronze for his 2016 Sangiovese and the highest honor of a Double Gold for his 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon during the recent San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition.

Deer Hill Vineyards went commercial in 2010 with wines available in Diablo Foods, Total Wine & More and through the vineyard itself. Scanlin explains his road to the awards by saying, "I haven't really entered many competitions lately. As a board (LWGA), we decided that we needed the recognition for our location as we try to pursue American Viticultural Area designation."

The San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition was founded in 1983 as the Cloverdale Citrus Fair Wine Competition. It was renamed in 2000, due to a sponsorship agreement with The Chronicle. The location was moved to San Francisco where it became the largest wine competition of American wines in the world. The number of entries grew from 3,800 wines in 2007, to nearly double that in 2018 with a total number of 6,960 entries from the United States.

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Deer Hill Vineyards went through four days of judging by a panel of judges from trade, media, education and hospitality industries. The judges are aware of the category of wine (Pinot Noir priced above \$30), but they know nothing else about the wines that remain blinded until the competition's conclusion. Scores are based on criteria such as bouquet, clarity, ripeness, intensity, delicacy and subtlety. Oftentimes the judges have heated debates as to which wines deserve top honors, because the taste is in the tongue of the beholder. In order to achieve Double Gold status a wine has to receive a gold medal vote from every judge.

Scanlin entered the competition online and was required to submit five bottles of each entry. Once the bottles were shipped, all that was left to do was wait. The old adage "Good things come to those who wait" couldn't be more appropriate for Deer Hill Vineyards. Being an award winner can change the status of a wine by increasing sales and brand recognition. "It gives me some credibility to expand," Scanlin said, "and to look at my marketing efforts by getting my name out there."

The SFCWC creates an opportunity for all participating wineries to showcase their products at the Public Tasting held at Fort Mason in San Francisco on Feb. 15 from 1 to 4:30 pm. The winners are encouraged to display their plaque awards at their tables.

For more information about Deer Hill Vineyards visit DeerHillVineyards.com or call (925) 200-7676.

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