

CINNABAR

WINERY

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Tasting Room Employees Blend Three New Releases for Cinnabar

Saratoga, California (October 9, 2009) -- It is rare to have a tasting room staff qualified enough to determine the final blend of a limited-production wine, and even rarer to have a winemaker capable of letting go, but such is the case at Cinnabar Winery where a group of well-educated employees - some credentialed sommeliers - decided the varietal content of three wines sold exclusively at Cinnabar's Saratoga tasting room or via its website, cinnabarwine.com.

The feat was part of an in-house competition to determine the final blend of three new proprietary wines: *Philosopher's Stone*, *Cruvée* and *Tripartite*. "I adhered as closely as possible to the percentages determined by the winning teams," said Winemaker George Troquato of San Jose.

Ten employees participated including Tasting Room Manager Ken Omniabohs, Wine Club Manager Angela Cesari, and Grower Relations Manager Alejandro Aldama. The rest are part-time tasting room employees with other careers, but who are serious wine aficionados. "Wine is more of an avocation to our staff than a vocation," said Troquato. "The diversity of these wines is accentuated by the diversity of the people who blended them."

In addition to Om'niabohs (Los Gatos), Cesari (Boulder Creek) and Aldama (Los Banos), the teams were comprised of Lizabeth Gray (Santa Cruz), Mary Jane Reiter (San Jose), Aaron Hughes (Sunnyvale), Ina Henegan (San Jose), Dick Ouellette (San Jose), Kristen Jessie (San Francisco) and Malcolm Brown (Ben Lomond). Hughes and Reiter have garnered the first level of sommelier certification at the Professional Culinary Institute of California in Campbell.

Judges for the competition included all contestants as well as Troquato and Cinnabar President Suzanne Frontz. The competition consisted of three rounds of rotating teams, and each team submitted a blend for each of the three wines.

"I was truly impressed with the teams that devised the winning blends," said Frontz. "Their wholehearted interest in fine wine is clearly expressed in the quality of the blends they helped create."

Members of the winning teams were awarded the distinction of having their initials printed on the back wine labels.

Cruvée consists of merlot, cabernet franc and petit verdot while *Philosopher's Stone* and *Tripartite* are zinfandel-based wines that are blended with other hearty reds.

About Cinnabar Winery

Established by Tom Mudd in 1981, Cinnabar Winery (cinnabarwine.com) produces award-winning wines from the Santa Cruz Mountains, California's Central Coast, and other distinguished growing regions. The *Tasting Room and Event Center* in downtown Saratoga offer daily wine sampling, green-friendly accessories and clothing, custom gift baskets, regional festivals, corporate events and lifestyles seminars.

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