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7th Asheville Wine & Food Festival

Festival brought together a vibrant culinary community,
attracting 5000 attendees over the celebratory week!

August 28, 2015 – The seventh annual Asheville Wine & Food Festival, presented by sponsor Asheville Color Imaging, was held August 20-22 in downtown Asheville. The festival attracted 5,000 wine and food aficionados to three days of signature events: ELIXIR, NC’s largest distillery showcase and craft cocktail competition; SWEET, a feast of desserts, wines, and spirits; and the GRAND TASTING, featuring farm-to-table restaurants, artisan food producers, bakers, chocolatiers, craft brewers and distilleries, and winemakers who turned out to cook, pour, demonstrate, and serve their love to eager attendees. The festival, one of the largest indoor culinary festivals in the southeast, is a testament to the region’s growing food scene.

The highlight of the weekend was the **GRAND TASTING** on Saturday, August 22 at the US Cellular Center. Occupying all 3 floors with over 75,000 square feet, it brought together 145 of Asheville’s best restaurants, artisan food producers, vintners, breweries, and distilleries to entertain a crowd of more than 4,000.

In addition to book signings and blind wine and beer tastings, culinary demonstrations were provided by [Chefs Dan & Jael Rattigan](#) of the French Broad Chocolate Lounge; [Chef William Dissen](#), Chef-Owner of the Market Place Restaurant; [Chef Steve Goff](#), and [Chef Felicia Suzanne Willett](#) of Felicia Suzanne's from Memphis.

The Asheville Scene Chefs Competition rounded out the day with four great chefs from Asheville vying for the 2015 Title win. They were [Chef Hollie West](#) from Sweet Monkey Café & Bakery, [Chef Steven Goff](#) of Asheville, [Chef Joe Mitchell](#) from Chestnut Asheville, and [Chef Ryan Kline](#) from Buffalo Nickel.

Chef Hollie West took top honors with her sautéed quail with sweet potatoes. In addition to the title of the 2015 Best Chef for the Asheville Wine & Food Festival, Chef West received a \$1,000 shopping spree at [Blue Ridge Restaurant Equipment](#), a vacation package for 4 to Orlando provided by Universal Marketing Group, and a set of hand painted glasses from [Wine Me](#).

The Asheville Wine & Food Commercial Wine competitions received 73 wines, judged by the [French Broad Vignerons](#). The Double Gold Medal Wines were St. Paul Mountain

Vineyards of Hendersonville, NC - Viognier 2013 & Laurel Hill - Vidal Blanc 2014. Burntshirt Vineyards of Hendersonville, NC - Burntshirt Vineyards Estate White - Vidal Blanc 2013. Raffaldini Vineyards & Winery of Ronda, NC - Vermentino Superiore - Vermentino 2014. Watauga Lake Winery of Butler, TN - Fox Hollow - 50% Chancellor, 50% Steuben 2014. Parker-Binns Vineyard of Mill Spring, NC - Rose - Merlot 2014. ([complete listing](#))

ELIXIR was held at the Morris Hellenic Event Cultural Center in the historic Montford community on Thursday, August 20. While 300 attendees noshed on canapés provided by 67 Biltmore, North Carolina craft distilleries provided samples of their spirits. Mixologists from 10 Asheville bars and restaurants competed in the mixology competition, whereby they were tasked to create a cocktail utilizing a [CRUDE Small-Batch Bitters](#), along with their own homemade syrups and mixers. Judges from the Asheville Scene, Our State Magazine, and others quaffed the selections and announced [Kala Brooks](#) from Top of the Monk the winner, with [Noah Hermanson](#) from Sunny Point Café receiving honorable mention!

SWEET, on Friday, August 22 at the historic Grove Arcade in downtown Asheville, drew 600 attendees out to explore flavors put forth by 24 exhibitors, including bakers, pâtissiers, chocolatiers, vintners, wineries, brewers and distillers. The evening of desserts was held at 8:00 p.m. to allow dinner beforehand at Asheville's many independent restaurants. The shops at the Grove Arcade stayed open late for shopping, while a wildly entertaining performance was provided by the [Reggie Sullivan Band](#)."

Two non-profit organizations benefitted from the 2015 festival. The Asheville Independent Restaurant Association ([AIR](#)) and its "Chefs of Tomorrow Scholarship Fund." Established through AB-Tech's nationally accredited culinary program, AIR works to provide future hospitality industry professionals with financial assistance.

[Slow Food Asheville](#) is part of a global, grassroots movement with thousands of members around the world that links the pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment...food that is good for those who eat it, for the planet, and for the people that grow it. Projects include the Heritage Food Committee and the Appalachian Food Storybank.

Director Bob Bowles established the Asheville Wine & Food Festival in 2009. Asheville Color Imaging is the 2015 Title Sponsor. Additional sponsors included Pure Leaf, Whole Foods Asheville, Asheville Citizen –Times and Asheville Scene, Grove Arcade, Kitchen & Company, Biltmore, Blue Ridge Restaurant Equipment, Chef Works, ARTeries, and hotel sponsors, media partners, and supporters. www.ashevillewineandfood.com