



NEWS RELEASE - 13 July 2009

Visitors to this year's Bristol Wine and Food Fair enjoyed a relaxed and enjoyable three days at the region's premier wine and food event at Bristol's Harbourside. The annual event attracted some 11,000 visitors over the weekend of 10-12 July with crowds flocking to enjoy fine wines, epicurean delights and an opportunity to see some of the country's top chefs in action in the Chef's Theatre.

The popular wine tasting sessions ran throughout the weekend with well-known experts such as Tim Atkin, John Avery and Susy Atkins taking their audiences on a sampling tour of wines from around the world. The cheese and wine matching masterclasses, introduced by Fiona Beckett, were a particular favourite.

The event started with a business networking and hospitality session on Friday which ran from 11.30-4 providing an opportunity for some of the region's top businesses to entertain their guests and visit the gourmet producers, importers and vintners before the event opened to the general public in the evening. Visitors were given a special treat when top chef and restaurateur Raymond Blanc gave the opening Chef's Theatre masterclass before the fair was officially opened by the Lord Mayor of Bristol, Christopher Davies.

Gaymer Cider Company, sponsor of the Food and Drink Market in 2008 and again this year, used the event as a relaxed and informal opportunity to invite many of their customers and business contacts from around the region. The event provided an ideal platform to showcase their wide portfolio of quality ciders which were really well received by members of the public, many of whom made the Gaymer stand their first and last stop off point.

Peter Spencer, Managing Director, said of the event "As a South West based producer we are proud to engage with and support events that promote the very best of South West food and drink. The Bristol Wine and Food Fair is an excellent opportunity for Gaymer Cider Company to showcase its portfolio of quality products to a wide audience of food and drink fans."

Diane Abbott, Gaymer Cider Company Events manager, was delighted with how the whole weekend went. "I think the atmosphere at the fair brilliantly suits our objectives which are to

raise brand awareness through sampling opportunities, as well as having our product range available on the stand and in the main bar.”

“Additionally we have been really impressed with the way we have been able to work in close partnership with Chris Scholes and the BWFF team to build on last year’s experience and make the most of this year’s event.”

GBItalia, a Bristol based importer and supplier of traditional high quality Italian wines, were also attending for the second year running and praised the friendly very positive atmosphere at the event which they felt was due in no small part to the excellent organisation and help they received from the BWFF team in setting up for the event.

Rosemarie Chianta said: “I thought this year was particularly enjoyable and very relaxed, with more space in the wine pavilions making it easier for people to get around and view all the stands. This year we opted to bring a wider selection of our product range to the event, with over 30 varieties on offer at the stand. The public particularly enjoyed the liqueurs with the Villa Giulia Amaretto and Limoncello both selling well over the weekend. I was also delighted that some of our visitors from last year returned specifically to our stand to purchase the award winning wines they remembered from before.”

“I hope Bristol Wine and Food Fair continues for many years to come – we average one event a month throughout the UK each year, and this is definitely the best event for us!”

In addition to the food producers market and wine and cheese pavilions, and a host of informal tastings and demonstrations, visitors were treated to a series of cookery masterclasses from some of the UK’s top chefs including Mitch Tonks, Martin Blunos, Rachel Demuth, Christopher Wicks and Raymond Blanc. All impressed upon the visitors the importance of choosing quality ingredients whatever culinary delights they might be inspired to cook following the educational and entertaining sessions, and the chance to taste the chefs dishes.

Visitors exiting the event gave rave reviews with many upgrading to weekend tickets or purchasing additional sessions from the box office before returning home laden with bags full of a host of goodies including chopping boards, charcuterie, confectionary and preserves, in addition to plenty of bottles of liqueurs and top wines alongside outstanding artisan cheeses.

A key feature of the event for many was the informal opportunity to sample some of the world’s great wine varieties, from wines for everyday drinking to top end champagnes and vintages. The ‘Yellowtail’ sample sessions were an instant hit, with visitors chilling out in deckchairs listening to tunes selected to match their wine of choice.

“Best event ever”, “a brilliant day out”, “roll on next year” were just some of the comments from visitors who travelled from throughout the UK and from further afield to attend the event, including a couple from South Africa visiting Bristol friends who were thrilled to find such a gourmet extravaganza in the heart of the city.

Commenting on the weekend, Bristol Wine and Food Fair organiser, Chris Scholes, was full of praise for the exhibitors and visitors at the event. “The breadth of choice and range of products available this year was superb – excellent quality – with so many of the exhibitors from last year in particular getting into the carnival feel of the event and revelling in the crowds keen to sample the best they had to offer.”

“Visitor numbers were a bit disappointing, not helped by the downpour on Saturday evening, but the wine pavilions in particular were absolutely buzzing and many of the exhibitors reported a significant increase in sales over the weekend.”

“Members of the public who I spoke to were extremely complimentary and expressed their support for the event, and I was impressed at how friendly and relaxed the atmosphere remained throughout the weekend. It was great to see so many people really appreciating what these artisans and producers had to offer.”

“Praise goes too to all of the team behind the scenes who worked tirelessly to make this event such a success. Cheers all round!”

Dates for the next Bristol Wine and Food Fair are yet to be confirmed, but based on this year’s event it promises to be a highlight of the local food event calendar for 2010.

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Bristol Wine and Food Fair is organised by Bristol Event Management, an independent local company.