

## **CONSUMER WINE AWARDS COMPETITION SET FOR 2012**

### *Consumer Preferences Can Surprise, Validate Experts*

November 7, 2011, Lodi, CA -- The 5th annual Consumer Wine Awards at Lodi, open to wines from every region, grape variety, type and style in the world, will take place here March 17-18, 2012. Wines entered in this unique competition are evaluated by panels of everyday wine consumers in multiple categories of wine types, styles and price ranges. The unique event celebrates both the diversity of wines and of wine consumer preferences. Last year's Platinum winners included an amazing range of wines from inexpensive table wines to high-end Napa Cabernets, wines from many states across the US and other countries, representing a full spectrum of wine flavors and styles.

"The Consumer Wine Awards recognizes and celebrates the fact every person has unique physiological and sensory differences that profoundly affect wine and food preferences," said co-director Tim Hanni MW. "The people evaluating each wine category will be the very consumers who are most inclined to buy and enjoy those wines, and this creates a new way for other consumers, who share similar tastes, to confidently explore wines recommended by their peers."

Awards are given in a variety of formats identified on the website, [www.consumerwineawards.com](http://www.consumerwineawards.com), and will also include a special George M. Taber value wine award celebrating his upcoming book, "A Toast to Bargain Wines".

This year the Consumer Wine Awards will create "Best of Country" Awards for wines from around the globe; e.g., the highest scoring wines from Argentina, Australia, France, Italy, etc., will be given the opportunity to be tasted in their own sub-category by country, by consumers who favor traditional wines with regional character, or can be included in the traditional varietal categories at the discretion of the producer or importer. The top scoring wine from each country would be awarded "Best of (Country/Region)". "This is a great way for producers everywhere to see how their wines rate with their own countries' wines or, at their discretion, against U.S. and international competition," Hanni said.

G. M. "Pooch" Pucilowski, co-director, said that the competition is growing in popularity, reaching almost 1000 wines last year. He said, "Wineries should participate in the 2012 awards to tap into what we estimate to be in excess of 40% or more of the total wine market. We reach out to the overwhelmed, intimidated and disenfranchised core wine consumers who do not seem to respond to the language, values and conventional wisdom of the traditional wine community. We believe the wine industry can benefit from a completely new direction and strategy that can only come from critically rethinking the consumer opportunity."

Several research programs are accompanying the competition, helping participants identify consumer palatal preferences. "With over 100,000 wines in the market, these consumer preference awards are guidelines for the industry," Pucilowski said.

Distributors, retailers, restaurateurs and hoteliers are using the prize winners in their own wine programs, said Hanni. "It's a win-win, with winning wineries working with the trade to show the consumers that their tastes are being factored into wine programs." The competition is sponsored by the Lodi Tokay Rotary Club and proceeds fund local and international charitable projects.

**Key Dates:**

- January 4, 2012 - First Day for receiving entry applications and wines (or labels)
- February 24, 2012 - Last Day for accepting entry applications and wines (or labels)
- March 17-18, 2012 - Competition to be held at Hutchins Street Square in Lodi, California

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Interested in becoming a Consumer Wine Evaluator for the 2012 Consumer Wine Awards at Lodi? Go here to apply:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CWAL2012\\_Consumer\\_Evaluator\\_Application](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CWAL2012_Consumer_Evaluator_Application)