

## CHINA WINE SHOW FEATURES LODI WINE

A selection of fine Lodi wine was presented to consumer and trade attendees at the Shanghai China International Wine Expo March 12-14. According to Mark Chandler, who attended the event “the Lodi wines were some of the most popular wines at the show” due to the softer, fruit forward style of Lodi wine.

Several Lodi brands were offered for tasting – Ironstone/Leaping Horse, Van Ruiten, LangeTwins, Michael David Vineyards, Jessie’s Grove, Barsetti, and Peltier Station.

“Wine consumption in China is growing in double digits” Chandler observes. “Wine’s health benefits are well known, and the 25-40 year olds are earning good money and wanting to emulate Western culture, especially wine drinking.”

While the market potential is vast, the competition is fierce. The French have been in the market for over a decade and in the consumer’s mind they have carved out the premium position for imported wines. Inexpensive domestic wines dominate the market but are of modest quality. As soon as the Chinese consumer can afford to shift up to imports, they do. Retail prices in China are about 3 times what they are in California, so market development is taking time.

Chandler was accompanied by Lodi Chamber of



Commerce CEO Pat Patrick. In addition to the trade show activities, they met with high level Chinese and American trade officials, and visited wholesale, retail and restaurant wine outlets. “Selling wine in China is much more complicated than here in the US, so it is not going to be for everybody, but it does represent a huge opportunity for those willing to invest in the market. Ironstone and Van Ruiten have made significant commitments in China, and it is beginning to pay off.”

To help maximize Lodi’s opportunities for wine and other products in China, Chandler and Patrick will be hosting an inbound trade mission of Chinese buyers and officials to Lodi later this year.



**WINE & CHOCOLATE 2009** was the top choice for people when deciding how to spend the Valentines Day Weekend! The event, in its 12th year, was a huge success! Despite the rough weather and pressures of a weak economy, the event grew 35% from last year with several wineries reporting record sales. Over 4,100 people descended on Lodi for the weekend. The wineries stepped up to the plate by offering creative chocolate concoctions to pair with their wines; served up was everything from chocolate candy to chicken smothered in mole and even chocolate chili! The Wine & Chocolate event has taken on a life of its own and is a true testament to the success of the efforts being made to promote Lodi Wine Country!

## SOMMELIER ENJOY GREAT TRIP TO LODI

The Lodi Winegrape Commission partnered with Denver-based Sommelier Journal Magazine to host their inaugural Terroir Experience. The event brought 25 leading wine and food professionals from across the country on March 11, 2009 to discover the magic behind Lodi vineyards. Sommeliers from as far away as New York and Atlanta spent the day traversing the appellation learning about our history, viticulture, soils, climate, and qualities that make Lodi wines distinctive. The group admittedly knew very little about Lodi, but came away with a much better appreciation of the diversity and authenticity of our region, and were encouraged to integrate our wines into their restaurant programs.

The group began the day with several lectures on the



region and our Lodi Rules program before venturing out to visit local vineyards. Sommeliers are on the front line in educating consumers and are a critical audience to reach in building the brand reputation of Lodi winegrapes. Editor David Vogels summarized the event, “We are extremely grateful to all of the producers for helping make the inaugural Terroir Experience a success. In particular, Mark and Stuart at the Lodi Winegrape Commission, without their hard work we would not have been able to pull this off. We can only echo what our participants told us: this was a great event that was a true immersion in Lodi. From getting out in the vineyards with the winemakers to tasting all that the region had to offer, it was a wonderful experience.”

## CHANGES MADE AT THE LODI WINE AND VISITOR CENTER

If you drop by the winegrape commission office at the Lodi Wine and Visitor Center you will notice a big change in the layout. Over the course of several weeks in January the center completed construction of the new tasting bar in the main visitor center area, under the large mural on the north wall. Although overall square footage has decreased, the tasting counter was greatly expanded to accommodate more guests in a one-to-one tasting experience. The wine storage cabinets have also been retooled and expanded to house a broader and deeper selection of Lodi wines. Some of the original exhibits, now nearly nine years old, have been removed and their educational materials are being redesigned to better fit the new space. According to Visitor Center Manager Michael Perry “This recrafting of the Visitor Center space has created a more intimate and open feeling to better serve our guests coming to discover and learn about the great vineyards and wines of the Lodi region.”



Wine & Roses Hotel has also completed construction of their new front desk and reception area in the former Visitor Center tasting room. All guests checking in at the hotel are now just a few feet away from the tasting counter. The hotel is also adding 25 additional rooms at the back of the property that are scheduled to be completed this summer. The above combination is guaranteed to increase foot traffic at the new tasting counter, and consequently generate more sales and wine club members.

The Wine & Visitor Center continues to be an integral tool in the overall Lodi Winegrape Commission marketing strategy. Hosting thousands of tourists, trade representatives, and industry groups throughout the year the Visitor Center is at the center of moving the region to new heights. The center remains open 10-5 daily.

# LODI WINES "ON THE ROAD AGAIN"

A few days prior to his departure for China, Mark Chandler was on the East Coast to present Lodi wines to two important audiences.

The first event was March 4 at The Restaurant School at Walnut Hill College in Philadelphia, PA. Two dozen culinary arts students and wine enthusiasts from the Wine and Spirit Education Trust tasted through a dozen top Lodi wines and viewed a powerpoint presentation on the Lodi region. Chandler was assisted in this effort by widely known Chef Tony Lawrence, who has been a friend of Lodi wine for many years.

March 5-7 was spent at Cape May, New Jersey at the Dionysian Society Annual Meeting. Just what is a Dionysian, you ask? It is the world's oldest wine society,

claiming roots back into the BC era. Dionysus was the god of wine in Greek mythology. After coming into contact with Greek culture, the Romans adopted Dionysus as their god of wine, but they called him Bacchus.

Two American wine enthusiasts, John Mahoney and Phillip Mazzoni of New Jersey, established the American chapter of the international society in 1978. Their annual wine fest at Cape May each March is by invitation only, so it is quite an honor to be asked to present our wines there. The 80 high end wine consumers and collectors in attendance were very impressed with the quality and wide range of varieties that Lodi does so well. Based on this good showing, perhaps a repeat invitation will be forthcoming!

## 2008 CRUSH REPORT

Final Grape Crush report pegs the statewide crush at 3,061,420 tons down from 3,247,503 tons in 2007. Crush district #11 production decreased nearly 17% to 530,872 tons from 624,264 tons in 2008. However, the average price for grapes in Lodi rose nearly 22% to \$482.57. Leading the decrease in production was Cabernet that saw nearly 23,000 tons less harvested in 2008, but saw a \$150 average price per ton increase. Cabernet seemed particularly hard hit by last season's frost. Merlot also saw a large decrease in 2008 with a 22,000 ton drop in production. A portion of this decrease is due to acres grafted in recent years.

The outlook for 2009 remains positive. Despite the current economic upheaval, Lodi seems particularly well positioned for this recession. Total wine consumption continues to rise in the USA driven by ever-thirsty millennials and baby boomers. Consumers are trading down to more moderately priced wines that are predominately based on quality Lodi winegrapes. Frugality has become hip and Lodi's ability to over deliver is key to thriving in this new economy. Looking forward, an average size crop in 2009 would further strengthen demand for Lodi winegrapes. The final crush report is available at [www.nass.usda.gov/ca](http://www.nass.usda.gov/ca).

VARIETY	2007		2008		PRICE INCREASE (%)
	TONS	AVG PRICE/TON	TONS	AVG PRICE/TON	
Chardonnay	128,597	\$397.48	116,322	\$495.17	25%
Pinot Grigio	23,159	\$565.69	20,801	\$599.49	6%
Sauvignon Blanc	22,782	\$406.03	18,817	\$447.90	10%
Cabernet Sauvignon	104,350	\$336.11	81,976	\$487.08	45%
Merlot	78,591	\$379.99	56,288	\$461.03	21%
Petite Sirah	20,203	\$563.09	17,807	\$650.85	16%
Syrah	22,270	\$357.85	17,846	\$450.08	26%
Zinfandel	164,130	\$428.32	144,626	\$482.57	13%

**TRADE LEAD** Grapes Wanted- All Varieties. Contact Joe at Vintage Crop Service 209-712-1212



# ZINFEST 2009

The 5th annual ZinFest Wine Festival is just around the corner and we are looking forward to another successful year! With a growing list of participating wineries, vendors, cooking school chefs and a variety of new activities and entertainment, this year's event will be bigger and better than ever before. ZinFest's kickoff party, the Vintner's Grille on Friday, May 15th is the place to be. Enjoy live entertainment, great food, great friends and best of Lodi's Zinfandels!

As ZinFest continues to grow and draw more people from all over the country we continue to reach out for help with the event. We are seeking volunteers to assist in

set up, clean up and everything in between. Please contact Stuart or Courtney at (209) 367-4727 if you are able to contribute! The more help we have the smoother and more enjoyable the event will be for attendees!

Tickets are now available for ZinFest 2009!! Don't miss your opportunity to be part of this fantastic event that continues to put Lodi Wine Country on the map!

## LODI WINEGRAPE COMMISSION Crush District 11

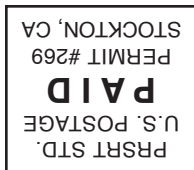
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