

South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival Joins the 'Movement' by Expanding Craft Beer & Spirits Jam

Wine, charity and fun converge during Northwest Florida Beaches Ultimate Wine Week, April 28 - May 1, 2016

Miramar Beach, FL ([PRWEB](#)) April 19, 2016 -- This spring there is even more reason to get into the spirit and raise a glass at the third annual Craft Beer & Spirits Jam.

This year's kickoff event to the South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival will be held on Friday, April 29 from 6 to 9 p.m. and staged throughout the Town Center of Grand Boulevard at Sandestin, located within the beach communities of idyllic South Walton in Northwest Florida.

Just one look at what's on tap and what's in the well of nearly any bar across the nation and it's clear to see that the virtual renaissance of "precision" cocktails and fine crafted beers continue to cause a stir.

"Just like the wine movement in the U.S. 25 to 30 years ago, people are interested in learning more about the products they enjoy consuming," says Chan Cox, founder of South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival. "It fascinates people to understand how things are made and what goes into it."

As an entrepreneur and pioneer of the local wine, spirits and craft beer industry, Cox has carved a career out of staying in front of trends and translating them into meaningful experiences for his customers. In addition to marking 31 years as a wine festival founder and producer, Cox owns and operates seven [Wine World](#) retail stores and this year he opened his fourth Craft Bar on the Northwest Florida Gulf Coast.

According to Cox, anyone who doesn't embrace the 80 million millennials — the first generation (born after 1980) to come of age in the new millennium — is "missing a huge market."

Cox plans to cater to this discerning market segment by inviting even more knowledgeable "celebrities" to come and talk about their products, increasing the number of quality distilleries and craft beer vendors pouring their best and expanding the menu of culinary offerings served up on EATS Street.

Winemaking isn't the only art form deserving of time and attention — and tasting — at this four-day festival celebration. "There really is an art to making quality spirits and fine craft beers," Cox says. "Considering all the creativity that goes into it, I would consider a lot of these distillers, winemakers and brewers artists. I may not be an artist myself, but I can certainly appreciate those who are and what they create."

Food & beverage industry "celebrities" representing some of the hottest breweries and happening distilleries from across the country will be pouring more than 100 different kinds of specialty craft beers and spirits samples at the Craft Beer & Spirits Jam.

Highlights of this lively event include celebrity guest appearances by some of the beverage industry's elite including Willie Pratt of Michter's American Whiskey Company; Gary Nelthropp, president and CEO for Cruzan Rum Distillery, the largest distributor of American private label rum founded in 1760; and Wes Henderson of Angel's Envy, son of Bourbon Hall of Fame master distiller Lincoln Henderson.

Along EATS Street, guests will be able to nibble a smorgasbord of savory small plate menu items prepared by a range of award-winning restaurants, eateries and food trucks including Another Broken Egg Cafe, The Beach House, Cabana Café, Cantina Laredo Mexican Gourmet, The Craft Bar, Long Leaf, Roux 30A and Crepe La Rus.

The event is made possible with generous support from returning sponsors including Abita Brewing Company and New Belgium Brewing Company and two new sponsors, Lagunitas Brewing Company and Samuel Adams Brewery. Local favorites Grayton Beer Company and Idyll Hounds also return this year.

No party is complete without music. This year's special live music guest, hailing from Freeport, Florida, is The Owsley Brothers. Billed as a psychedelic garage blues, the band features J. E. Reynolds on vocals and guitar; Brian Wise on second guitar; John Reinlie on drums; and Zion Cochran on keys and effects.

The South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival continues through the weekend. The event showcases more than 800 domestic and imported wines, two days of tastings and seminars plus wine lovers will be treated to live entertainment and special features such as Champagne Lane and Spirits Row.

Presented with support from Visit South Walton and Wine Enthusiast magazine, the festival offers the ideal backdrop for a beach getaway. ResortQuest by Wyndham Vacation Rentals is the Official Lodging Partner of the festival and many of their accommodations are beachfront, beachside or a short stroll to the beach. They are currently offering festival discounts that include discounted tickets. Go to [Wyndham Vacation Rentals](#) for details.

South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival is made possible by the generous support of the following Founding Partners: Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation, Visit South Walton Tourist Development Council, Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association, Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa, Wine World of Northwest Florida and Grand Boulevard at Sandestin.

The Craft Beer & Spirits Jam kicks off the festival Friday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Advance tickets are \$35. To purchase tickets and view the full festival schedule visit www.sowalwine.com.

About South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival

This year's annual South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival will be held April 28-May 1, 2016 throughout the Town Center of Grand Boulevard at Sandestin. The festival features a stunning showcase of the best wines the world has to offer. Celebrity wine producers and chefs present fine wine and food pairings from the world's most famous appellations. The Savor South Walton Culinary Village offers a sumptuous array of foods to taste, wines to pair, as well as wine and food tasting seminars and live entertainment. The event is a major fundraiser for Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation, which benefits children in need in Northwest Florida. For more information, including a list of featured winemakers and to purchase tickets, visit www.SoWalWine.com.



Contact Information

Stacey Brady

Grand Boulevard at Sandestin

<http://www.grandboulevard.com>

+1 (850) 837-3099 Ext: 3

Stacey Brady

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<http://www.sowalwine.com>

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