

Wine at the movies

Johndrow Vineyards, a Napa winery with Oklahoma owners, was one of the featured wines at the Sundance Film Festival for the second year in a row.

BY GREG HORTON

Park City, Utah, is home to one of the film industry's biggest events: the Sundance Film Festival. Every year, actors, producers, directors, screenwriters and anyone else who is involved with film or wants to be around the film industry descends on this small town to celebrate some of the year's best independent films.

"Everybody there was an artist: winemakers, actors, master chefs," said David Johndrow, a California winemaker from Oklahoma.

For the second year in a row, David and Maryann Johndrow from Oklahoma City, owners of Johndrow Vineyards, were invited to pour their Napa Valley wines as part of the scheduled dinners for the film competition.

"There are 12 dinners for the films being considered for awards," David Johndrow said. "Our wines were poured at four of those dinners. We submitted the wines to the executive chefs before the competition, and the chefs paired the wines with their dishes. It was exciting to see our wines paired by chefs like Michael Mina and Philippe Chow."

Johndrow said the festival used all the wines in the winery's portfolio for different courses of the meal. The wines are JV Clarity, a white blend, JV Red, JV Cabernet, JV Reserve

above from left David Johndrow, Malin Akerman and John Powell at Sundance 2010 with a huge bottle of Johndrow wine

Cabernet and Forum, a red blend.

"After one of the meals, we went to a private John Legend concert, maybe a hundred people, and afterwards, Bill Gates was holding a bottle of the Reserve Cabernet," he said.

The event was a great opportunity for these Oklahoma City entrepreneurs to showcase their wines. The stage will grow even larger for them in March, when their wines will be featured at the Academy Awards nominating party. The event is a private party for all the nominees for this year's Academy Awards.

"We have a letter of intent for the Academy Awards," Johndrow said. "I just have to sign it."

The wines have been a big hit in Park City, and there is no reason to believe they won't be equally popular in Los Angeles. Johndrow will still be pouring his 2006 line at the Oscars, just as he did at Sundance, but it's likely Oklahomans will have a crack at his 2007 line of wines before the film industry.

The 2007 Reserve Cabernet is simply the best wine this young

winery has produced. It will be available in Oklahoma at the end of April, when the rest of the 2007 line is released. Priced about \$40, this Reserve Cabernet is a full, rich, balanced mixture of great fruit flavors, solid tannins and an incredibly silky finish.

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—David Johndrow

Johndrow said the 2007 wines will rival the 1997 Napa wines. "It was a perfect growing season," he said. "We were able to go down row after row and pick the best ripe fruit. The fruit was perfect."

Stan Stack of Beau's Wine Bin & Spirit Shoppe, 2810 W. Country Club Drive, is a fan of Johndrow wines. He carries the entire line at his store.

"I like all of them," Stack said. "Clarity is a nice, white blend, with great fruity flavors. I try to explain to my customers the difference between fruit and sugar

— a wine can be fruity without being sweet. Clarity certainly is. It's what I like to call a back-porch sipper — an excellent wine for summer days."

Stack said his customers are divided on whether they like the JV Red or the JV Cabernet better. "I have about half who like the Red better, but the other half think the Cabernet is better. They're both good wines, and they're both priced about \$20."

Beau's also has the 2006 Reserve Cabernet, which Stack calls "outstanding," as well as Forum, a big, complex blend of five Bordeaux varietals.

Rob Lawson is the winemaker for Johndrow Vineyards, and Forum is his special project. The wine is layered and dense, with pepper, spice, dark fruit, chocolate, solid tannins and a big, attention-grabbing finish.

Lawson is also the winemaker for Ghost Block Cabernet, an Oakville wine that Johndrow said is one of his favorites, when he's not drinking his own wine. **OKG**

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OKLAHOMA GAZETTE

