

DROP IN

to the Newport Seafood & Wine Festival this weekend

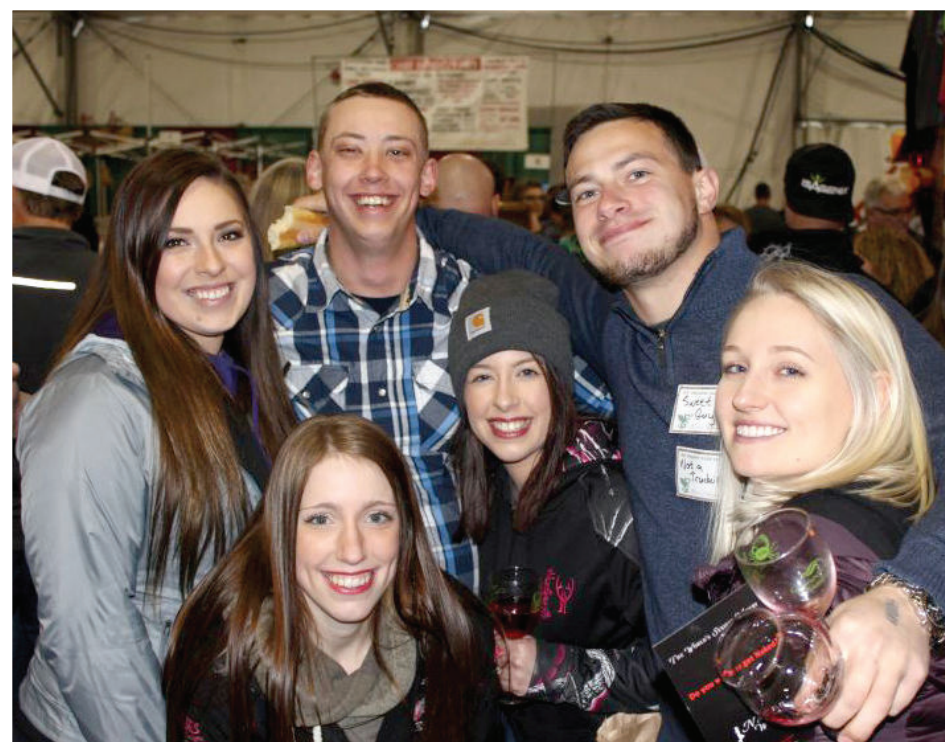
Winter on the coast means the Newport Seafood & Wine Festival, quite possibly the most popular annual event on Oregon's pristine shores. Every year since 1977, the city of Newport draws seafood and wine fans from California and the Pacific Northwest to taste, sample and mingle with locals and visiting enthusiasts.

Now in its 43rd year, the festival celebrates the ocean's bounty and the lush vineyards championed worldwide. It has become a four-day extravaganza featuring commercial and amateur wine competitions, culinary professionals offering a tasty variety of seafood delights and regional artisans showcasing their craft.

The festival kicks off at 5 pm on Thursday, Feb 20, for the traditional locals' night, which, while not limited to locals, typically offers highly spirited entertainment without the challenge of weekend crowds. Friday, Saturday and Sunday's events include larger audiences, expanded hours and awards ceremonies.

This year, 134 wines are competing for the festival's coveted awards. Judges awarded 34 gold medals, 27 silver medals, 36 bronze medals and one Best of Show, which went to Spangler Vineyards for their 2015 Petite Verdot. There are also the hotly contested amateur wine and booth decoration competitions, both of which are decided by a vote of the festival's guests, who number between 20,000 and 25,000 every year. This number includes the hundreds of volunteers and 170 vendors who comprise almost half of the crowd.

The vendors are the heart of each day's activities. Wineries provide tastings and purchases by the bottle or case. Food vendors offer a smorgasbord of seafood delights, including crab melts, oysters, fish tacos, clam chowder, smoked fishes, seafood gumbo, crab and shrimp cocktails. There are multiple eclectic cultural dishes and non-seafood delicacies such as cured meats, candies, fudge, jellies and jams, dried herb blends for cooking, local cheeses, breads, stuffed olives and an array of



nuts. Beer lovers can enjoy ales, pilsners, IPAs and stouts. Artisans showcase their pottery, jewelry, glass art, clothing, beads, wood crafts and commemorative festival merchandise.

An organizing committee of community and chamber members includes multiple

unsung heroes who donate time and behind-the-scenes energy to the festival. The festival is a major fundraising event for the chamber and the many local non-profits that benefit by providing contract services, including parking support, security, cleaning services, assistance with

food vendors and pouring for the wineries.

The festival organizers work hard to mitigate congestion by capping daily attendance and offering daily shuttle bus service from 23 locations throughout Newport. Look for the Mid Columbia school buses to get free transport to and from the festival site at the Newport Marina, adjacent to Rogue Brewery. A map of the shuttle stops and schedules is available at <http://seafoodandwine.com/event-map>.

Chinook Winds Casino Resort is the festival's presenting sponsor and offers tremendous support to ensure its success. In addition, there are more than 50 businesses, both local and out-of-area, who participate with various levels of sponsorships.

For more information, ticket prices, schedules, maps, shuttles, parking, hotel and sponsorship information, go to <http://seafoodandwine.com>. A festival app is available on the site. Saturday admission is by e-ticket only; must be 21 or older with valid ID.

Ruby Club Membership, available for \$155, offers four-day VIP entrance pass, a commemorative wine glass, swag bag with vouchers for wine tasting flights, food and merchandise.

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