

The Daily Astorian invites people to submit the wine, beer or craft spirits they enjoy and share a few thoughts. This week, Steven Sinkler, of The Wine Shack in Cannon Beach, gives us his insight. To submit, send to news@dailyastorian.com

Q: The striking thing about the inventory of your store is your decision to focus on Oregon and Washington wines. Tell us about that decision.

A: I made the decision to focus our wine selection on Oregon and Washington for two reasons. First, we live near some of the finest wine regions in the world. I wanted to showcase exceptional selections from the Willamette Valley, southern Oregon, Walla Walla and the Columbia Valley. Second, customers want to try locally made products. Why would I offer an Australian Syrah when Walla Walla and southern Oregon is producing wines of equal or higher quality?

Customers have given us great feedback on our emphasis on local wines.

Q: You recently traveled to Walla Walla to survey that treasure trove of wines. Tell us what you found.

A: Winemakers in the Walla Walla area are making world class wines. The cabernets, merlots, syrah and riesling coming out of Walla Walla can stand next to wines from Bordeaux, Loire, Alsace as well as Napa and Sonoma. Anyone who doesn't believe that has blinders on.

Some of my favorites are: Sleight of Hand, Zerba, Gramercy Cellars, Walla Walla Vintners, L'Ecole and Bergevin Lane.

These wineries deliver excellent products at competitive prices.

Q: Where do your customers come from?

A: As you can imagine, the majority of our customers visit from the Pacific Northwest, Portland, Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia. However, we also have a surprisingly strong customer base from Northern California, Phoenix and Houston.

Q: What do you say to the first-time customer who says, "I don't know that much about wine"?

A: We have new wine drinkers in the store every day. We want to make sure we help them find the perfect wine for them, so we start by asking questions, such as, "Do you like 'red' or 'white,' 'fruity' or 'dry'?" From there, we then determine their budget. We continue to ask questions to narrow in the wine that will work for them.

Q: What variety is your biggest seller?

A: Puffin Pinot Noir is our store's best seller. Nothing else is even close. Puffin is our store's proprietary brand and consistently earns high medals from local judges. Our 2012 Puffin Pinot Noir won a double gold medal last October at an invitational wine competition.

At only \$29 per bottle, it's an exceptional value.

Q: Does that change through the year?

A: No, Puffin Pinot Noir is our best selling wine 12 months of the year.

Q: The wine media is fairly expansive. What do you read?

A: I try to read about wine as much as possible. I read Wine Spectator, Wine Enthusiast, Oregon Wine Press and Wine Press Northwest. I also look at results from local wine competitions to see which wines are showing especially well right now.



Steven Sinkler, owner of The Wine Shack in Cannon Beach.

Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Obama to host jazz concert at White House

Artists with international flavor to appear

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — International Jazz Day, one of the world's biggest celebrations of jazz, is coming to the White House.

President Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle, plan to host a blockbuster concert April 29 featuring Aretha Franklin, Al Jarreau, Sting, Herbie Hancock and many other established and up-and-coming musical artists. The show is to be televised by ABC the following day, on April 30 — the fifth anniversary of International Jazz Day.

Scores of musical performances and educational and community service programs are also planned for across the District of Columbia, in all 50 states and 196 UNESCO and United Nations member countries, said Tom Carter, president of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz. The jazz institute and UNESCO sponsor International Jazz Day. It was established to highlight jazz music as a unifying force for freedom and creativity.

The District of Columbia is where the famous jazz



Carolyn Kaster/AP Photo

Andra Day and Anthony Hamilton perform for President Barack Obama, front row, lower right, and others during the "In Performance at the White House" series in the East Room of the White House in February.

pianist and bandleader Duke Ellington was born, on April 29. The city is also known for its thriving jazz scene.

Previous host cities for

International Jazz Day were Istanbul, Turkey, in 2013; Osaka, Japan, in 2014; and Paris in 2015.

In 2012, programs were

held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris; in New Orleans, the birthplace of jazz; and at the U.N. General Assembly Hall in New York City.

"Jazz has been a unifying force and very unifying for people all over the world for the last century," Carter told The Associated Press by tele-

phone. "It is the voice for many of those facing challenges around the world."

Last year's programming reached more than 2.8 billion people, he said.

Hancock, a UNESCO goodwill ambassador whose idea led to the creation of International Jazz Day, said jazz is a musical language that is understood worldwide.

An award-winning pianist and bandleader, Hancock said that, in the past, anyone who wanted to learn jazz had to travel to America. But "incredible" jazz musicians are now everywhere, he said.

"That really shows me the power of the music and the fact that it has reached every country on the planet," Hancock told the AP in a telephone interview.

Obama and the first lady are big music lovers and supporters of jazz. During a recent appearance at the South by Southwest festival in Austin, Texas, Mrs. Obama said one of her grandfathers loved and collected jazz and that she would visit him on Saturdays while growing up in Chicago "and I would just play music with him."

The Obamas practically jumped at the chance to bring the International Jazz Day concert to the White House, Carter said.

"They welcomed us with open arms," added Hancock.

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