



DANNY MILLER/THE DAILY ASTORIAN
Dungeness crab in a great big pile.

CRABFEST COMETH

Food and wine, arts and crafts, live music and family fun

Vendors look forward to Astoria Warrenton Crab, Seafood & Wine Festival all year

By CATE GABLE
FOR COAST WEEKEND

Asked to describe the Astoria Warrenton Crab, Seafood & Wine Festival, Don Nisbett — an artist, cartoonist and local personality from Ilwaco, Washington — replied: “It’s an adult prom.”

“You get to dress up and go out and have a great time,” he said. “Everybody is in such a good mood — you’re sipping wine and eating great food, visiting and going around to all the vendors.”

The 35th annual festival will be held Friday, April 28; Saturday, April 29; and Sunday, April 30 at the Clatsop County Fair & Expo Center. A family friendly venue for food and wine, arts and crafts, live music and more, the festival draws approximately 14,000 to 16,000 people, and about 175 vendors, each year.



JOSHUA BESSEX/THE DAILY ASTORIAN
Crews at the Astoria Clowns booth prepare crab and shrimp melts during the 2016 Crab, Seafood and Wine Festival at the Clatsop County Fair and Expo Center.

A growing festival

A vendor himself, Nisbett is famous for his hand-painted wine glasses. His most popular image: Crabs pouring or drinking wine. But every year, he comes up with new ideas.

“All year long, every time I get a spare minute, I start painting glass for the crab and wine

festival,” he said.

Some vendors, like Nehalem Bay Winery, have been serving at the festival for more than 20 years.

Melissa Stetzel, the winery’s general manager, remembers when Crabfest used to take place at the Hammond waterfront. One year, a big storm

blew half the festival tent away.

“So moving to a permanent location was great,” Stetzel said. “Everybody is protected from the weather, which is too unpredictable this time of year.”

The festival, including the number of wineries, has grown. “There is more variety,” said Stetzel, who is unfazed by the competition. On Valentine’s Day, the winery released a 2014 Pinot Noir.

Kelsey Balensifer, event coordinator for the Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce, said the festival has 60 alcohol vendors total: 55 wineries, four local breweries and one local distillery.

‘Let’s try it!’

Leslie McCray, a vendor who owns Sweater Heads, makes clothing, hats and accessories from reclaimed sweaters and other found fabrics. She once owned a deli and painted houses for a while. But she wanted something to do when she couldn’t paint. So she started making hats and selling them at fairs in Oregon and Washington.

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IF YOU GO

When: April 28, 29 and 30

Where: Clatsop County Fair & Expo Center, Highway 202, four miles from the U.S. Highway 101 junction, 92937 Walluski Loop, Astoria.

Check out: Getting to the Festival Page, as parking is limited. Shuttles are available from Astoria or Warrenton.

HOURS AND PRICES:

Friday, April 28 – 4 to 9 p.m.

Saturday, April 29 – 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

\$10 adults

\$5 children (ages 5 to 12)

Sunday, April 30 – 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

\$5 adult admission

Free children (ages 5 to 12)

Free military (active duty military ID required)