

Savoring a diversity of flavors at the Cannon Beach wine walk

Savor from Page 1A

Some wineries such as Pudding River Wine Cellars have been attending since the festival's inception seven years ago, said winemaker Sean Driggers, who brought along bottles of its 2014 gold medal winning Syrah. "The east Willamette Valley of Oregon is unique and really good for producing high quality grapes much like the great wine growing regions of Rome and France."

Marissa Ooyevaar-Voorhies and her husband Tyler from Willamette Valley Vineyards spoke of the wine's minerality and how the soil can bring out the minerals of the Willamette. "The Willamette Valley has a lot of different soil types because of the Missoula floods which scraped the surface of the soil and deposited it in different ways throughout Oregon." This, she explained is why different wineries from the valley can have different wine tastes from not only the soil type but vine type as well.

This was the first year back for Sokol Blosser Winery since the first year of the festival, according to Lee Medina who was busy sharing the winery's history and pouring a medal-winning Estate Rosé of Pinot Noir. He explained that when there is an abundance of this versatile grape, there are more rosés coming out of the valley. "It's all in the process and the first straining of the grape which gives the rosé its color."

John Derthick of Lujon Wine Cellars has been attending the wine walk for four years and loves being part of this festival. He began working at a winery in Sonoma in 1994, attended the wine program at UC Davis and returned to Oregon in 2003. Relatively a new winery, Lu-



Winemaker Greg Matiko of Skylite Cellars with guests at Cannon Beach Bakery.

jon was conceived in 2005 and has produced some highly rated wines from Wine Enthusiast and Wine Spectator ever since. "As a winemaker I think Oregon is in a unique position. From my perspective I'm able to make great wines from a huge variety of grapes from all over the Northwest."

Savor Cannon Beach continues in popularity. Well over 900 individuals attended this year's event with almost all tickets presold. But it's not only the attendees who benefit; the festival donates a portion of the proceeds to a local charity, according to Gary Hayes, owner and publisher of Explorer Media Group and

organizer of the event.

"Clatsop Animal Assistance needs all the help they can get and we are proud to have them as our recipient." Part of the budget, Hayes noted, includes a grant from the city's Tourism and Arts Fund, which gives a portion of the city's lodging taxes to arts-related events.

Whether your interests fall to the bold and hearty reds, the aromatic whites or the softer blends and syrah, the overall scope of Oregon and Washington's wines abounded with a diversity of flavors and styles, enabling wine walkers with enough excellent samples to quench everyone's thirst.

REBECCA HERREN/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE



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Marissa Ooyevaar-Voorhies of Willamette Valley Vineyards poured at Jeffrey Hull Gallery.

Author speaks on tragedy

Urbani from Page 1A

enjoyed writing and it became a form of therapy, she said. Being from the South, Urbani's characterization of the victims of that storm allows for a fictional interpretation of these historic events.

"I could write my own stories," Urbani said. "I could write well and I really wanted to write a book of family stories, as I prefer to write about truths I know."

Her family was horrified upon hearing the news and burst into tears, not about the divorce or that she had left her career behind, but at the thought of her writing about them. "They begged me: please don't do it."

Afterwards, she respected their rights and agreed not to write the memoir.

She decided to go in a different direction and make something up. Writing fiction was new and frightening. After some thought, she realized she had lived on the edge before and why not embrace fiction writing as a new challenge. She could, she said, still take similar themes she wanted to write in the memoir and filter them into her fiction writing. "And that is where 'Landfall' came from."

"In so many ways, we fail to know each other," Urbani said. Think about the people you're closest to, the secrets we keep from each other. Sometimes we wind up closer to a stranger than the person we've chosen to spend our life with. Even with fiction, we let ourselves seep into our writings."

She posed the question: "Can we come to understand the people we love?" and answers, "that is why I wrote 'Landfall' — to find the paths through these secrets and a way toward knowledge."

The first year was spent researching, mostly on the storm. Although the book is not about the hurricane, Katrina became a character, a



REBECCA HERREN

Author Ellen Urbani at the Cannon Beach Library.

backdrop for the story. When asked, Urbani said it took 18 months to write the book and another year to fine-tune.

"Landfall" follows the journey of two women named Rose as they navigate the troubled waters of their lives in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Showing the resiliency of the human spirit, Urbani creates a fictional world within the aftermath of the devastation caused by the storm. "Through the grief, came beauty," she added.

Urbani said she is grateful that people read her books and when asked what the best part about being a writer is, she smiles appreciatively and answers: "I get to go around and meet people, talk about myself and people listen."

Urbani earned a Bachelor of Arts in writing and design at the University of Alabama before serving as a Peace Corps volunteer from 1991 to 1993. Upon returning to stateside, she earned a master of arts degree in art therapy from Marylhurst University specializing in oncological diseases and trauma survival. Her work became the subject of a short documentary "Paint Me a Future."

"Landfall," a book of contemporary historical fiction, won the 2016 Maria Thomas Fiction Award from Peace Corps Writers, was named a 2015-16 Great Group Reads by Women's National Book Association and was named Book of the Year in Lunel, France. "Landfall" was published in 2015 and premiered on the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.



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