

THE JEFFERSON CUP INVITATIONAL WINE COMPETITION

Doug Frost MS, MW
The Jefferson Cup Invitational
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Kansas City, Missouri – The Jefferson Cup Invitational, now in its ninth year, is the only competition that honors the best of the best among wineries from all of America’s wine regions. Each year we select great wines from across America; the 2008 competition included wines from thirty states. At the end of the second day of this year's tasting, November 21st, wines from EIGHT different states had captured top honors. Just as the event’s namesake would have it, democracy reigned at this year’s Jefferson Cup Wine Competition.

The two-day competition culminated with the awarding of SEVENTEEN Jefferson Cup Awards. Jefferson Cups were awarded to wines made from both vinifera vines (a European species responsible for most famous wines such as Chardonnay and Cabernet) and non-vinifera vines, which flourish in the more extreme climates in the center portion of the U.S.

These seventeen prestigious Jefferson Cups were awarded this year to one sparkling wine, five white wines, nine red wines and two dessert wines. “While many competitions insist upon selecting a pre-ordained number of sweepstakes winners, our judges are allowed to find the top wines, whether there are only one, two or three, or even NO winners in some categories, as has happened in the past,” says Jefferson Cup Invitational founder Doug Frost. “Indeed this year, there was no rose winner, though a number of rose wines won awards. Best of all, there were once again great examples of wine, both from vinifera and non-vinifera grapes.” Together with fifty-one other wines nominated for (but not awarded) the Jefferson Cup, these seventeen wines represent some of the most compelling wines made in America.

This year’s Jefferson Cup competition saw some very notable developments and successes. For one, Cosentino Winery had a record number of Jefferson Cup nominations (5) and won THREE Jefferson Cups, a record achievement in a single year. Although many expect California to dominate the awards, New York and Michigan each won two Jefferson Cups for their wineries. And little Rhode Island has its first Jefferson Cup for Sakonnet's Vidal Blanc 2007.

As in years past, the West Coast was well represented. Eight reds from California won; one Washington State winery won a cup as well. In another remarkable victory, Eagle's Trace Pinot Noir 2006 Valhalla Vineyards won its second Jefferson Cup in a row; the 2005 was a winner last year too. Wineries such as Stone Hill Winery (Missouri), St. Julian Wine Company (Michigan), Dry Creek Vineyards (California), St. James Winery (Missouri) continued to dominate among nominations, if not among the Jefferson Cup winners this year. Other notable nominees also included Ridge Vineyards Montebello 2005 and Quintessa 2006.

“In the last few years, the Jefferson Cup seems to have focused upon Syrah or Cabernet,” says Frost, “But this year, there was greater diversity of wines, though non-vinifera wines ruled among the dessert wines, and vinifera grapes dominated among the red wines. “I am very pleased with the way the Jefferson Cup Invitational competition has developed,” Mr. Frost said. “We had a representation of the best of what every quality wine producing region in the country is offering right now, including improved representation from Washington and Texas as well as some standout wines from California, New York and Oregon. Michigan and Virginia wines rose to the top of the pack this year and New York State wineries leaped ahead too.”

The Jefferson Cup Invitational is a nine-year-old competition founded by Doug Frost, one of only three individuals in the world to have achieved the titles of Master Sommelier and Master of Wine. “In most other competitions there is ‘open’ seating,” says Frost, “and California represents 90% of the entries. As a result it usually captures 90% of the honors,” he said. “I can now foresee a time when that will not happen. What we are doing is following Mr. Jefferson’s example and allowing every quality wine-producing region in America a place at our table. We look forward to continuing to grow our competition as the rest of the country continues to grow the quality of their products.”

“While many may know him from his well-chronicled statesman role, most Americans have no idea just how influential Jefferson was in the way we eat and drink and live today”, Mr. Frost said. “To call Mr. Jefferson ahead of his time where food and wine are concerned is the ultimate understatement,” Mr. Frost said. “Mr. Jefferson was growing grapes that did not really come into vogue in this country until 20 years ago!”

Best of all, this year’s Jefferson Cup coincided with our fourth annual fundraiser for Angel Flight, a great charity that gives support for private pilots offering travel to indigent and needy medical emergencies. The Jefferson Cup fundraisers raised more than \$80,000 for Angel Flight.

About the Jefferson Cup Invitational

The Ninth Annual Jefferson Cup Invitational took place on November 20 and November 21, 2008 in Kansas City, Missouri. The Jefferson Cup is a different sort of wine competition, in that it is an invitational in which approximately seven hundred wines are pre-selected which exemplify viticulture and winemaking in America.

The Jefferson Cup Invitational does not award golds, silvers and the like. Rather, the invited wines have all proven their excellence in competitions and tastings throughout the last year. We believe and try to publicize our belief that these are wines that are extremely deserving of the nation's attention.

This year, out of approximately seven hundred chosen wines, the judges selected just over three hundred twenty-five wines to receive the "Certificate of American Merit", which respects wines exemplary of their regions and varieties. Next the judges chose eighty-eight wines (there was no pre-ordained number or percentage) that they believed were truly great wines. Those will receive medallions announcing them as "American Examples of Greatness".

This year, sixty-eight wines were selected as Jefferson Cup honorees; these wines were nominated by the five judging committees to receive Jefferson Cups. Out of those sixty-eight honored wines, the judges together picked seventeen wines to be awarded the Jefferson Cup. By selecting both vinifera and non-vinifera wines for the Jefferson Cup each year, the hope is to respect the diversity of American viticulture and Jefferson's own acceptance of native varieties and hybrids.

This year's judges included the following industry luminaries: Glen Bardgett, (a St. Louis restaurateur and a founder of the Missouri State Fair judging), Wayne Belding MS (past Chairman of the Court of Master Sommeliers and a Boulder, Colorado wine merchant), Laura dePasquale MS (one of the world's few female Master Sommeliers), Bob Foster (writer, *The California Grapevine*), Doug Frost MS, MW (author and consultant), Patty Held-Uthlaut (former proprietor of Stone Hill Winery and a lifelong Missouri wine veteran), Robert Noecker (a Midwestern wholesaler and thirty year veteran of the wine industry), Jeff Miller (a Kansas distributor of two and a half decades experience), and Joyce Walsh (a Missouri wholesaler and industry veteran of twenty-five years).

The Jefferson Cup is partially supported by the Missouri Grape and Wine Program, an extension of the Department of Agriculture, State of Missouri.

Doug Frost MS, MW

Director, Jefferson Cup Invitational

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The 2008 JEFFERSON CUP winners are:

For Sparkling Wine:

L Mawby Mille 2002 Leelanau Peninsula

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For White Vinifera Wine:

Peninsula Cellars Riesling Select 2006 Old Mission Peninsula

Fetzer Valley Oaks Gewurztraminer 2007 California

Geysler Peak Chardonnay Water Bend 2007 Alexander Valley

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For White Non-Vinifera Wine:

Anthony Road Vignoles 2007 Finger Lakes

Sakonnet Vineyards Vidal Blanc 2007 Southeastern New England

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For Red Vinifera Wine:

Eagle's Trace Vineyards Pinot Noir Valhalla Vineyards 2006 Napa Valley

Cosentino Winery Cabernet Franc 2006 Napa Valley

Camaradarie Cellars Elegance 2005 Columbia Valley

Cosentino Winery Cabernet Sauvignon The Winemaster 2005 Napa Valley

Rubicon Cask Cabernet Sauvignon 2005 Rutherford

Cosentino Winery Meritage M Coz 2006 Napa Valley

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For Red Non-Vinifera Wine:

HolyField Winery Tailgate Red nv Kansas

Augusta Winery Estate Norton 2005 Augusta

Chrysalis Vineyards Norton Barrel Select Locksley Estate 2007 Loudoun County

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For Dessert Wine:

Lakewood Winery Glaciovinum 2007 Finger Lakes

Rotta Winery Black Monukka Dessert Wine 2004 California

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