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WINE COMPETITION HAS A LONG HISTORY

For 69 years, the L.A. County Fair wine competition has showcased the finest vintages from America and countries throughout the world, and illustrated time and again why this wine tasting competition is widely considered to be one of the most prestigious in the United States.

- The competition, which began in 1935, is the oldest county fair wine tasting in the nation and was named one of the Top 5 wine competitions in the country by USA Today.
- Beginning shortly after the end of prohibition, the L.A. County Fair began awarding medals to the finest wines in California. The event quickly grew to world-class stature.
- In 1991, judging included not only entries representing the California wine industry, but wines from throughout North and South America. Eventually, Italian varietals were added.
- In 2002, the doors were opened to entries from around the globe.
- In the formative years of the wine competition, only 16 judges participated and fewer than 200 wines were sampled. It was later extended to two days, and in 1981, the event expanded to its current format of three consecutive days, with approximately 100 international judges and nearly 4,000 wines.
- The Fair introduced a public wine tasting area in 1968, and in 1998 established a wine education center where the public can participate in wine education classes, enjoy gold medal-winning wine tasting and a display of award-winning wines.
- The late Harold Richardson, a noted California lawyer and wine connoisseur, chaired the inaugural L.A. County Fair wine judging. He and his wife, Ann Mayock, nationally known for her fine California-styled Los Amigos Sherry, built the event into one of the most important of its kind anywhere.

- Nathan L. Chroman, author of *Treasury of American Wines*, columnist for Wine Times magazine and former Los Angeles Times wine critic (1968-1987) was chairman of the competition from 1967-1997.
- Dr. Robert W. Small, professor and wine educator within the Collins School of Hospitality Management at Cal Poly Pomona, was elected chairman in 1998 and retains that title today.
- A strong emphasis is placed on educating the public about wines, and a wine education program is presented during the Fair, which will be held from Sept. 5 – Oct. 4 (closed Mondays and Tuesdays). The program features public wine education classes and gold medal wine tasting. Participants will have the opportunity to learn from industry experts about what to look for in particular wines. Award-winning wines will be on display and gold medal-winning wines will be available to sample for a fee.
- The Los Angeles International Extra Virgin Olive Oil Competition began in 2000 with 28 entries. Its name was changed in 2007. Nearly 400 oils were entered that year.
- The wine event changed its names in 2007 to the Los Angeles International Wine & Spirits Competition, adding spirits to the event. The first spirits competition featured 100-percent Blue Agave tequila.
- In addition to the new name change in 2007, that year also brought the first-ever sponsor to the International Wine & Spirits Competition. Supermarket chain Ralphs signed on to a four-year sponsorship.
- In 2008, a new competition was added that pitted sports celebrities and their wines against each other. Wine World of Sports was a hit, with Tommy Lasorda's Lasorda Wine, *Pinot Grigio, Veneto IGT 2007* taking the gold.