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West of West Wine Festival Comes to Sonoma This August

By Ian White on July 15, 2011 4:00 PM



Only an hour from San Francisco, West of West Wine Festival (WOW) is three days of Sonoma-style wines, cuisine and education. There's certainly no shortage of summer festivals, parties and events in the wine country, but few offer this kind of access to high level, small production, limited release wines in a down to earth and versatile format.

For three days (August 5-7), the cozy town of Occidental will be a buzz with the famed Pinot Noirs, Chardonnays and Syrahs of the area, all showcased in a variety of ways that suit the palate of anyone into wine and local food. Make a full weekend out of it or chose from intimate wine dinners, seminars on wine and winemaking, a grand tasting featuring over 30 coveted wine brands and a “Whole Hog Feast” with live music and wine pairings to go with the locally-raised heritage pork.

Having access to all of theses wineries in one place is damn convenient because, unlike Napa, the wineries of Sonoma are not squeezed into one tight, geographically-convenient valley. Additionally, many of the featured wineries are family-owned, closed to the public, and too far apart to visit in a weekend.

There will be plenty wineries on hand (a few personal favorites: Flowers, Freeman, Benziger and Patz & Hall). Work the room and make new friends at favorite wineries where you can return as a welcome guest to try reserves and other backroom treats.