



February 25 - March 2, 2008

PLAYHOUSE WINE FESTIVAL SALUTES VINO ITALIANO

January 9, 2008

In Short:

All events on sale January 22 at 9:30am. **The 30th Anniversary of the Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival highlighting Italy from February 25-March 2, 2008** at the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre. Celebrate Italy- the theme region and wines from around the world. This year guests will sample over 1600 wines, from 16 countries at 60 events. This year try the coveted Gold Pass – see more and try more. Call 604-873-3311 or buy online at www.playhousewinefest.com

The Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival is widely regarded as the best consumer wine show on the continent. The spotlight this year is on Italy and the Festival's regional theme is:

Vino Italiano: Innovation by Tradition

"Italy was the obvious choice as theme country for our 30th anniversary," says executive director Harry Hertscheg. "The three words that clearly describe Italian winemaking are tradition, passion and innovation, and those same three words describe the Playhouse Wine Festival at this stage in our history. We have a tradition of innovation in wine appreciation, one that has earned us the reputation as the premier consumer wine show in North America. People are very passionate about the Festival, from our consumer and trade attendees to our sponsors and industry partners to our incredible volunteers. Cheers to our 30 years!"

Director of the Italian Trade Commission Dr. Antonio Lucarelli says, "The Italian wine is one of the most successful products made in Italy in the world, because it is a direct expression of the Italian lifestyle, enclosing history and culture, tradition and design, landscape and handicraft, the main distinctive features of my country."

About 25,000 consumers and trade professionals are expected to attend the 30th Playhouse Wine Festival, which is now firmly established as the premier wine show in Canada and one of the biggest and most respected in the world.

Approximately 1,600 wines will be poured at the 60 events, including 21 Italian-themed events and 12 events exclusive to trade servers and buyers, during the weeklong homage to the grape. The heart of the event is the Tasting Room, home to 176 wineries from 16 countries serving 701 different wines. Guests discover new wines as they visit with renowned winery principals (winemaker, proprietor or senior executive) from around the globe. In the discovery section of the Tasting Room, guests visit the wine growing regions of Italy in one convenient area.

THEME COUNTRY SIGNATURE EVENTS...

Molto Italiano

VCEC, Meeting Room 11

999 Canada Place 5:00-6:45pm \$95

This seminar will explore the most legendary wines Italy has to offer. In one room, try the best of Barolo and Brunello de Montalcino, classic Chianti Riserva, amazing Amarone, seminal Super Tuscans and some soon to be legendary wines from the south. This blockbuster tasting will include some of the greatest wines from Italy, featuring Altesino, Antinori, Ca' del Bosco, Damilano, Donnafugata, Feudi di San Gregorio, Masi, Marchesi de Frescobaldi and Ruffino. Sponsored by the Italian Trade Commission

Gusto Italiano

VCEC, Parkview Terrace

999 Canada Place 12:30-3:00 pm \$90

Discover and celebrate the diversity that 29 wineries have to offer while enjoying the tantalizing, colourful, Italian-inspired buffet thoughtfully designed by VCEC Executive Chef Blair Rasmussen. Principals from Agricola Marrone, Altesino, Antinori, Apollonio, Batasiolo, Bertani, Bolla, Cantina Breganze, Carpineto, Corte Giara, Cusumano, Damilano, Di Majo Norante, Donnafugata, Feudi di San Gregorio, Cantine Giacomo Montresor, Illumati, Masi, Mionetto, M.G.M. Mondo del Vino, Opera Vino, Prunotto, Villa Rinaldi, Ruffino, Cantine Talamonti, Tormaresca, Umani Ronchi, Vini Tonon and Casa Vinicola Calatrasi are happy to show you how their native vines and terroir form a solid bond to create outstanding wines that can be nothing less than Italian. Sponsored by the Italian Trade Commission

Vino Design

Inform Interiors

50 Water Street 7:00-9:00 pm \$49/\$40 for groups of 6 or more until February 15

Live la dolce vita in true Italian style surrounded by the finest in Italian design, sipping on sophisticated and innovative wines from the most stylish country on the planet. Chill in the modern luxury of Inform Interiors while sampling the coolest sparkling wines and white wines from Italy, alongside delectable Italian finger food. Participating wineries include Agricola Marrone, Altesino, Antinori, Bertani, Cantina Breganze, Castello di Gabbiano, Col de Salici, Fazi Battaglia, Cantine Giacomo Montresor, Mezzacorona, Mionetto, Rocca Delle Macie, Voga Italia. Sponsored by the Italian Trade Commission (logo); Event Partner - Inform Interiors Theme Country Seminarian...

THEME COUNTRY SEMINARS...

The Global Influence of Antinori

VCEC, Meeting Room 8

999 Canada Place 5:00-6:45 pm \$75

Piero Antinori has personally selected eleven wines produced by his wineries from across Italy and around the globe for this ambitious seminar.

From Washington State to Tuscany, from Napa to Piemonte, from Chile to Chianti, the influence of Antinori is inarguable. A comprehensive world tour of the greatest wines that Antinori Estates have had a hand in producing, led by the Marchese himself - "can't miss" can't describe it adequately.

Sponsored by the Italian Trade Commission

Banfi Clonal Presentation

VCEC, Meeting Room 8

999 Canada Place 5:00-6:45 pm \$75

Poggio Alle Mura is a Castello Banfi offering that is the result of over two decades of research in clonal selection for the Brunello (Sangiovese) varietal. This wine is a cru of three particular isolated clones that Banfi and the University of Milan have been studying since 1982. This is a study that has changed the landscape in Montalcino and the world renowned wines that are produced here.

Join us for an in depth study and unparalleled tasting of the three special Sangiovese clones. BF 30, Janus 10 and Janus 50 all contribute to the rich, forward flavours of world class Brunello. Poggio Alle Mura is also Castello Banfi's first unfiltered Brunello. This is an exciting opportunity to taste barrel samples from the three clones as well as the blend and the fantastic newly released vintage. The tasting will begin with a Super Tuscan, Cum Laude 2004 and will also include a selection of Brunello Normale, Poggio All'Oro Brunello Riserva. Also up for discussion is how these full, rich wines can complement a variety of international dishes and food styles. *Sponsored by the Italian Trade Commission*

THEME COUNTRY BOARDROOM TASTINGS...

Bertani Amarone Vertical

The Sutton Place Hotel

845 Burrard Street 3:30-5:00 pm \$175

Carefully selected grape bunches are hand-harvested in Bertani's best Valpolicella vineyards in Fumane, Marano and the Novare Valley. Unlike most leading Amarone producers, who buy grapes from outside growers, Bertani's harvest originates entirely in the firm's own vineyards. With their marly-calcerous soil sheltered by surrounding woodland, these vineyards offer the ideal terroir for nurturing the quality of grapes necessary for producing a world-class Amarone. Light appetizers will be served at the end of the tasting, which takes guests all the way back to the 1964 vintage. *Event Partner Nicola Wealth Management*

Italy's First DOCG - Carpineto Vertical

Deloitte & Touche

2800-1055 Dunsmuir Street 5:15-6:45 pm \$95

Founded in 1967, Carpineto was the first Italian winery to receive the Robert Mondavi Trophy for excellence and was nominated as the Best Italian Wine Producer at the 34th International Wine & Spirits Challenge. Presented by winery owner Antonio Mario Zaccheo Jr., this boardroom tasting features a vertical of Carpineto Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Riserva going back to the fabulous 1986 vintage. The exploration of the terroir includes Super-Tuscan blends, single-vineyard wines, and a single-grove olive oil from this historic appellation near Siena. Carpineto has developed an award-winning, international reputation for consistently elegant wines with unmatched intensity and extract. *Event Partner Deloitte & Touche*

THEME COUNTRY WINERY DINNERS...

An Evening at the Castello

Quattro on Fourth

2611 West 4th Avenue 6:30-10:00 pm \$128

Castello Banfi and Quattro on Fourth bring you an evening of expressive wines, passionate cooking and wonderful entertainment. The delightful and entertaining New York based fine wine specialist and Castello Banfi ambassador, Mr. Philip Di Belardino, will be the guest host for this Tuscan dinner event. His love for wine and his light and humorous anecdotes will delight all and make you wish you were in Italy. A selection of fine wines from Castello Banfi will be presented, including the newly released Principessa Gavi, the landmark Brunello di Montalcino and Super Tuscan Summus, amongst an array of other classic Castello Banfi wines, intricately paired with the impeccable cuisine of Quattro Chef Bradford Ellis. This will surely be an evening of outstanding food, brilliant wines and a memorable Italian experience.

Ciao Italia!

Earls Paramount

905 Hornby Street 5:00 pm-7:00 pm \$69/\$60 groups of 6 or more until February 15

Uncorked Italian-style as Earls once again plays host to the Festival's kick-off event. Mix and mingle with Earls Head Chef Reuben Major and Italian Winery principals Stefano Leone of Antinori, Francesco Domini of Tormaresca, and Emanuele Baldi of Prunotto. Enjoy perfectly paired tastes and flavours of Italy. The wine lineup includes Italian classics Antinori Santa Cristina Pinot Grigio, Villa Antinori Rosso, Prunotto Occhetti Nebbiolo d`Alba, Tormaresca Torcicoda Primitivo di Salento and more. Don't miss out on this one; la dolce vida awaits you. Salut!

Six Centuries of History, Tradition and Passion Cioppino's

1133 Hamilton Street 7:00-11:00 pm \$228

Highlighting the passion and tradition of the historic Estates of Antinori, this Tuscan experience will pair the timeless wines of Antinori Estates with Cioppino's refreshing and legendary perspective on Italian cuisine. Starting with a Sparkling reception, the menu will work its way through several of Italy's most renowned wines, including the legendary Brunello de Montalcino, Tignanello and Solaia. This incomparable combination is surely not to be missed.

An Evening with Frescobaldi

Umberto's Il Giardino

1382 Hornby Street 6:30-10:30 pm \$183

Join Marchese Leonardo Frescobaldi for an unforgettable evening of classic Tuscan wines from the Frescobaldi estates. The Frescobaldi family has been making wine in the heart of Tuscany for seven centuries. Umberto Menghi, Canada's premier Italian restaurateur, will carefully tailor the evening's menu to pair with outstanding vintages of the pioneering producer's top wines.

Cucina Italiana

Italian Kitchen

1037 Alberni Street 6:30-10:30 pm \$153

Hosted by Italian Kitchen, the newest restaurant in the Glowbal Group (Glowbal, Afterglow, Sanafir, Coast), "Cucina Italiana" offers a new approach to the Wine Festival's dinner program; it relies less on conventional winemaker's dinners and more so on innovation, atmosphere and drama. Expect a celebration of the "art of sharing" in a unique setting. Not quite the traditional three-course menu! Guests will share a selection of house-made and artisan-inspired hors d'oeuvres, appetizers, entrees and desserts that will be paired with nine premium wines from Bertani, Luigi Cecchi & Figli and M.G.M. Mondo Del Vino. The unique décor and music will perfectly complement this magnificent dinner.

Dine in Stile

La Terrazza

1088 Cambie Street 6:30-10:30 pm \$163

Enjoy the best of Italy in a superb multi-course dinner prepared by La Terrazza's chef Gennaro Iorio and paired with Italian selections from the portfolio of Stile Wines. Fresh local ingredients, timeless Italian cuisine and the wines of Mionetto, Damilano, Altesino, Umani Ronchi, Di Majo Norante and Argiolas are brought together to ensure an unforgettable evening. This luxurious, classic restaurant has become a mainstay at the Festival and is sure to deliver an unforgettable experience once again.

Perfection in Piedmont

West Restaurant

2881 Granville Street 6:30-10:30 pm \$193

From Batasiolo's vineyards nestled in rural northern Italy, comes a long-fostered tradition of winemaking described as "marca leone" or "only the very best." This old-world legacy lives on into the millennium, personified by the critically acclaimed West Restaurant, perennial winner of Vancouver's "Restaurant of the Year." Together, Batasiolo and West will guide guests through an exclusive multi-course dinner featuring contemporary regional cuisine paired with the top wines of Piedmont. Presenting "Perfection in Piedmont," a gastronomic voyage through the world-class wines of Batasiolo.

Tuscan Gold

CinCin

1154 Robson Street 6:30-10:30 pm \$153

Passion, respect for tradition and a commitment to innovation mark Ruffino's approach to winemaking. Encompassing the heart of Tuscany to the soul of the Mediterranean, Ruffino's emblematic wines from their single vineyard estates will be brought to life at the celebrated CinCin Ristorante atop bustling Robson Street. Together these historic houses will bring you the quintessential Tuscan experience, achieving art through concentration and complexity of flavour. Esteemed Proprietor Adolfo Folonari leads guests through a selection of Ruffino's flagship wines paired with CinCin's impeccable cuisine. Join us for Tuscan Gold, a culinary journey through the wine estates of Ruffino.

Piemonte to Puglia

Quattro on Fourth

2611 West 4th Avenue 6:00-9:30 pm \$178

Featuring wines from Antinori Estates' Prunotto and Tormaresca Wineries, this dinner will highlight the distinct styles and terroirs of Southern and Northern Italy. These world-class wines will be paired with the award-winning cuisine of the renowned Quattro on Fourth restaurant. Embrace all of your senses by treating them to an exploration of two of Italy's most important and exciting wine regions.

Tickets are available by calling the **Playhouse Box Office at 604-873-3311** or visit the web site at: www.playhousewinefest.com. Ticket prices include GST and ticket service charges.

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