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Wilton community celebrates at TrailFest fundraiser

By Fran Soto

River Valley Times Staff - Friends and supporters of the Wilton-based Central Valley Rails to Trails Foundation (CVRTF) were treated to a tasting tour of culinary delights at the annual TrailFest fundraiser held May 9. Also available to enjoy were the wares of local artists, a silent and live auction with distinctive gifts and a bike fun ride kick-off rounded out the activities during the afternoon and early evening. "I want to thank you all for coming," said Dr. Robert Hunter, who hosted TrailFest at his Hunter Stallion Station ranch, which is also the location of his veterinary practice. "I hope you visit all the booths, talk to a lot of people and have fun," Hunter said. CVRTF has worked for the past nine years to preserve 27.5 miles of the historic Central California Traction rail corridor as a trail for cyclists, joggers, equestrians and walkers. Although TrailFest is the biggest fundraiser of the year, CVRTF board of directors plans to share the proceeds from the event with local schools that border the proposed trail. "The funds will benefit science camp programs that help students explore and appreciate the great outdoors," said Betsy Mahan, CVRTF president. Under a huge white tent, attendees mingled as they sipped local wines and beers from a souvenir wine glass or beer mug. Tables with white cloths decorated with flowering native California plants surrounded the food aisle where those present filled their plates with a wide variety of gourmet selections.

Local wineries that participated in TrailFest included Lobo Loco Winery from Wilton, Blue Gum Winery, Peirano



Photo by Fran Soto

Friends and supporters of the Wilton-based Rails to Trails Foundation sample gourmet delicacies and local beers and wine at the 2009 TrailFest fundraiser. The event was held on May 9 at Hunter Stallion Station in Wilton.

Estate Winery, Woodbridge Winery and Macchia Winery. "Lobo Loco Winery is a sustainable farm, which is more complex than organic," said Ed Whitby, manager of the winery that is located on Alta Mesa Road. "It is a complete business plan; it's all about the way you conduct your business and treat your employees." Lodi Beer, Lockdown Beer, Sierra Nevada Brewery, Pyramid Beer and Sacramento Brewery were present to offer samples.

Food choices included spinach ravioli from De Vinci's Deli, pizza from Fat Mike's Pizza, grilled vegetables and veggie pasta salad from Elegant East Gourmet in Wilton, a salad bar provided by CVRTF, pulled pork and tri-tip from Big Al's BBQ, ribs and turkey from Cal Vada Meets BBQ and fudge treats from Merrilyns Wine Fudge.

As vendors arrived to set up their stations as organizers attended to last minute details, about 30 cycling enthusiasts gathered to kick-off the event with a bike fun ride to Macchia Winery and back in time to participate in TrailFest.

Jim Roxburgh, CVRTF board director, has worked for the past several months organizing a bike club for local residents and led the 33-mile bike ride. "It was a pleasant day with a flat course," Roxburgh said. "Some of our riders went wine tasting."

Attendees had a chance to guess the weight of a miniature horse named Gordo who resides at Hunter Stallion Station and is 34 inches tall. The evening ended after a live auction with auctioneer Dave Huisman and a silent auction. Items included gift baskets with themes of gardening, wine, food and bath products. Other items auctioned were art and framed photography, Music Circus tickets, rounds of golf, meals with public officials, a trip to Tahoe and even a one-hour scenic flight of the area.

The foundation meets the first Tuesday of each month, and meetings are open to the public. For more information on CVRTF, see their website at www.cvrtf.org.

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PO Box 209
Wilton CA 95693
(800) 700-2166

For comments or questions,
email us

President: Roy Herburger
rherburger@herburger.net

Publisher: David Herburger
dherburger@herburger.net

[Editorial email
rvt@herburger.net](mailto:rvt@herburger.net)

Managing Editor: Judith Unzner
rvt@herburger.net.

Advertising Director: Jim O'Donnell
advertising@herburger.net.

Advertising Sales: Donna Kendro
dkendro@herburger.net

Webmaster: Daniel Herburger
daniel@thegaltherald.com.

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