

Developed from the Laurinburg Exchange - Article June 23, 2010

Cypress Bend Vineyard Celebrates Five Years of Award-Winning Wine

Wagram, NC - Wood is the traditional gift to honor a fifth anniversary, but for this milestone, Cyprus Blend Vineyards offered up a night of good music, fine food and drinks.

The award-winning vineyard in Wagram celebrated with a special edition of the bi-monthly Jazzy Friday event.

The vineyard, owned by Dan and Tina Smith, gave away a free glass of wine to each patron, as well as unveiled a special anniversary wine to be formally introduced in August.

Tina Smith said that the celebration was a great occasion for the winery and the people of Scotland County.

“We planned it around our Jazzy Friday Night, which we do every other Friday night,” Smith said. “We gave away a free glass of wine and had cake and some reading of poems written by John Charles McNeil. We also held a tasting of one new wine called ‘Tomorrow.’”

The vineyard opened in Wagram in 2005 after three years of planning. Smith said that the vineyard has a rich history and that the idea for the vineyard came from the family’s desire to help Scotland County.

“One of the reasons this is important is because the farm has been in the family for over 200 years,” Smith said. “There’s a legacy here in Scotland County with this farm and we wanted to continue that legacy. There’s always been the desire within the family to give back to the community and we wanted to do something with the farm that gave back to Scotland County and bring tourists in. We wanted to help the area for that reason. That’s been one of the exciting things. This winery has put Scotland County on the map because it’s the only winery in an 80 mile radius.”

The celebration was part of the vineyard's Jazzy Friday event, which began in 2006. The event pulls in people from all around the state, including patrons from Raleigh, Lumberton, Southern Pines and Fayetteville. Smith said that the event usually has about 200 to 300 guest, but had more for the anniversary celebration.

Smith said that the Jim Morgan jazz group was a special treat at the party.

"The band is just phenomenal," Smith said. "It has progressed. We had a special guest appearance by Jim Morgan and his jazz group for our event. We've sort of brought jazz back to the area. It's just a great, safe place for people to come and enjoy the vineyards and the winery and a night out. People don't have to go too far for it either; it's right in their backyard."

When the vineyard opened, it consisted of five small acres. Now it stretches across 35 acres, while employing 12 people and offering 14 varieties of wine. The vineyard started out making 1,500 cases of wine per year and is now producing over 10,000 cases annually.

Smith said that most of the wines produced at the vineyard are named after family members, including their now famous red Campbell wine which was recognized as the best wine created with the native North Carolina muscadine grape.

"The wine names come from family farm names," Smith said. "It brings out all that history and the name together so we can continue that legacy."

The anniversary event was also be used to celebrate the military presence in the state. Ten couples from Ft. Bragg were invited to the anniversary event.

General Manager Jim McClanathan said that working at the vineyard has been an interesting experience.

“I’ve done a real about face,” McClanathan said. “I’ve worked in Scotland County for about 35 years. I was in the lumber business for a great many years, but I’ve known Dan and Tina for a long time and when they started this business up they needed a wine maker. This is a terrific place. A lot of people call this Scotland County’s greatest hidden secret. We’re hoping it’s not hidden, but we do tremendous business. We draw about 60 miles around the winery. This winery is a good drawing card for Scotland County.”

The vineyard is at 21904 Riverton Road in Wagram and is open seven days a week for tastings and tours.

For information, contact the vineyard at 910-269-0411.