



**SOUTH WALTON BEACHES
WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL**

**SOUTH WALTON BEACHES WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL KICKS OFF WITH CRAFT
BEER & SPIRITS JAM**

Wine, charity and fun converge during Northwest Florida Beaches Ultimate Wine Week

Miramar Beach, Florida (March 26, 2015) – Join the toast of the town by “raising a glass” at the second annual Craft Beer & Spirits Jam on Friday, April 24 from 6 to 9 p.m.

The creative tasting event kicks off the South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival’s annual four-day tasting event staged throughout the Town Center of Grand Boulevard at Sandestin, located within the beach communities of idyllic South Walton in Northwest Florida.

Food & beverage industry “celebrities” representing some of the hottest breweries and happening distilleries from across the country will be pouring more than 100 different kinds of specialty craft beers and spirits samples in the Culinary Village. Along Eats Street, guests will be able to nibble a smorgasbord of savory small plate menu items prepared by a range of award-winning restaurants, eateries and food trucks including Another Broken Egg Cafe, Cabana Café, Cantina Laredo Mexican Gourmet, The Craft Bar, Long Leaf, Roux 30A, Greek Gourmet and Raw & Juicy.

The event is made possible with generous support from the Abita Brewing Company, who is sponsoring the event for the first time this year. Abita began in 1986 as a small start-up craft brewery based in Abita Springs, La., and has expanded into the largest craft brewery in the Southeast. Abita produces seven flagship brews year-round: Abita Amber, Golden, Light, Turbodog, Purple Haze, Jockamo I.P.A. and Restoration Pale Ale. Abita also offers five seasonal beers, three Harvest brews, three Big Beers, a draft-only series of select beers and even a root beer sweetened with Louisiana cane sugar.

“Abita Brewing Company is excited to be a part of one of the premier festival events in the Southeast,” said Abita Brewing Company president David Blossman. “At Abita we brew our beers to pair with the great food of this region, so the South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival is just the perfect place to be.”

No party is complete without music. This year’s live music special guest is Boukou Groove featuring Destin’s own Donnie Sundal and Derwin “Big D” Perkins performing their smooth

signature blend of New Orleans-style funk, R&B, soul, blues and hip-hop.

Highlights of this lively event include celebrity guest appearances by some of the beverage industry's elite including David Blossman, president of Abita Brewing Company; David Laird, Balvenie's single-malt Scotch whiskey brand ambassador from Dufftown, Scotland; and Louisville, Kentucky's Wes Henderson of Angel's Envy, son of Bourbon Hall of Fame master distiller Lincoln Henderson, who developed Ancient Age, Gentleman Jack, Jack Daniels Single Barrel and Woodford Reserve.

Pouring his heart into the event is Randy Hayden, general manager of The Craft Bar and Wine World and a 17-year veteran of the food & beverage industry. "We really put a lot of thought into what we offer," Hayden says. "We love turning people on to new things. Our distributors will be pouring fan favorites along with new products that they are launching."

As a wine and food event, Hayden assures, the menu will not disappoint. "We take the food just as seriously as the drinks; each restaurant was hand-selected to participate," he says.

Hayden also is particularly proud that Craft Beer and Spirits Jam has become a showcase for emerging brands and products. "We are excited about having Grayton Beer back and are looking forward to introducing Idyll Hounds, a new brewery based in Santa Rosa Beach," he says. "People who don't know them will have a chance to experience their beer, which is exactly what this event is all about."

The South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival continues through the weekend. The event will showcase more than 800 domestic and imported wines, 216 of which earned medals from a panel of 24 industry judges during a blind tasting in January. In addition to two days of tastings and seminars, wine lovers will be treated to live entertainment and special features such as Champagne Lane, featuring floating bubbles and dozens of Champagnes and sparkling wines.

One of the weekend's highlights is the annual Destin Charity Wine Auction to be held on Saturday afternoon, which invites auction attendees to bid on luxury travel packages, collectable wines and other fine living lots. Proceeds from the auction and festival go to support more than a dozen children's charities in Northwest Florida.

Presented with support from Visit South Walton and Wine Enthusiast magazine, the festival offers the ideal backdrop for a beach getaway. South Walton beaches are consistently named among the best beaches in the country. ResortQuest by Wyndham Vacation Rentals is the Official Lodging Partner of the festival and many of their accommodations are beachfront, beachside or a short stroll to the beach. At this time, they are currently offering festival discounts that include discounted tickets. Go to [Wyndham Vacation Rentals](#) for details.

South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival is made possible by the generous support of the following Founding Partners: Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation, Visit South Walton Tourist Development Council, Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association, Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa, Wine World of Northwest Florida and Grand Boulevard at Sandestin.

The Craft Beer & Spirits Jam kicks off the festival Friday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. tickets are \$50 per person.

The Grand Tastings are on Saturday and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets are \$85 for Saturday and Sunday (tickets include Champagne Lane, wine and food tastings, seminars and live entertainment); and \$165 for the VIP Tasting with entry to the Grand Tasting. The VIP Tasting is Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the Grand Tasting starting at 1p.m. To purchase tickets and view the full festival schedule visit www.sowalwine.com.

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About South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival

This year's annual South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival will be held April 23-26, 2015 throughout the Town Center of Grand Boulevard at Sandestin. The festival features a stunning showcase of the best wines the world has to offer. Celebrity wine producers and chefs present fine wine and food pairings from the world's most famous appellations. The Savor South Walton Culinary Village offers a sumptuous array of foods to taste, wines to pair, as well as wine and food tasting seminars and live entertainment. The event is a major fundraiser for Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation, which benefits children in need in Northwest Florida. For more information, including a list of attending winemakers and to purchase tickets, visit www.SoWalWine.com.

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