

Chateau Clinet Winemaker Ronan Laborde to Make Celebrity Guest Appearance at South Walton Beaches Wine and Food Festival 2016

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

Miramar Beach, Florida ([PRWEB](#)) January 26, 2016 -- As a part of the four-day celebration of wine at the 2016 South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival, wine superstar Ronan Laborde, CEO of [Château Clinet Pomerol](#), will join an A-list of celebrities throughout the wine and culinary industry world, who will wine, dine and entertain wine lovers during the ultimate wine weekend in Northwest Florida.

This year's star-studded event will be held April 28-May 1, 2016 in Grand Boulevard at Sandestin located within the beach communities of idyllic South Walton in Northwest Florida.

“We are honored Ronan Laborde is joining us for his first-time visit to the beaches of South Walton and bringing his fresh perspective, deep passion and exciting new wines,” said [South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival](#) founder Chan Cox.

After earning a degree at the EDC business school in Paris, Ronan Laborde's father, Jean-Louis Laborde, entrusted the young trailblazer with managing the family wine estate beginning with the 2004 vintage. He was just 23 years old. He brought his business savvy, energy, and modern vision and it soon elevated the brand and yielded bottom line results. Today, Château Clinet has grown in both size and stature into an award winning, highly rated and respected wine brand.

“We produce 45,000 bottles a year, which is very small in the wine world, so what we bring is quality maybe some would say luxury,” says Ronan Laborde during a telephone interview from his offices in Pomerol, France. “Château Clinet has a longtime history, but also modernity.”

This “Pomerol powerhouse” has made an obvious impact during his 12 year tenure as CEO — he has grown the staff from four to a team of nearly 20 specialized professional roles, expanded the vineyards, added business partners to increase wine production, built a modern new production facility (in the midst of traditional stone chateaus) not to mention adding new products, such as a balsamic vinegar that should be ready for release in 2018. Despite his many successes, Laborde is quick to credit the 400-plus year old terroir — a complex blend of gravel, clay and iron rich sandy soils — with giving Château Clinet wines its award-winning character and complexity.

“My meaning of terroir is very great ... it is the sub soil, soil, wine, air and weather, know how of the people. It is many things,” Ronan explains. “So the quality of our wine reflects the quality of the grape — it is fruit forward, very complex and ages very well.”

Larborde, who says he is “manic” about a few things — namely being orderly, health-conscious and ensuring things are done well, is eager to make to his first visit to “beautiful North Florida” to share his new Ronan by Clinet wine and others and to connect with “like-minded” wine lovers. He says wine brings people together, because it can “help people talk” by serving as an introduction. But beyond the social aspect and the technical side of wine and wine making, for Laborde there is perhaps the best part — the joy of wine tasting.

“My personal feeling is when I'm with my wife and friends and I can concentrate on tasting good wine it makes

you feel alive. You smell and you dream of the different aromas and the different landscapes they take you to, the different terriors and these are lifetime memories — they are souvenirs. So people can look forward to this during this charity weekend.”

South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival will showcase more than 800 domestic and imported wines of which gold, silver and bronze medals will be awarded in approximately 80 wine categories, selected by a panel of 24 industry judges during a blind tasting competition held in February.

In addition to two days of wine tastings, wine lovers will be treated to food tastings, informative seminars, live entertainment and special features such as the lively Spirits Row and 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 [ResortQuest by 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.; the Grand Tastings are on Saturday and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Advance tickets are \$35 for Friday; \$85 for Saturday and Sunday (ticket price include Spirits Row, Champagne Lane, wine and food tastings, seminars and live entertainment); and \$175 for the VIP Tasting with express entry to the Grand Tasting. Two-day Grand Tasting passes are available for \$150. The VIP Tasting is Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the Grand Tasting starts at 1p.m. The event is rain or shine; sorry pets are not allowed in Culinary Village. To purchase tickets and view the full festival schedule visit www.sowalwine.com.

ABOUT SOUTH WALTON BEACHES WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL

This year’s annual South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival will be held April 28-May 1, 2016 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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