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Salute to African American Vintners



Oakland, CA — Statewide, nearly 20 million gallons of wine are produced annually, according to industry reports. Some \$35 billion in sales of California wines occurred in 2017, an increase from the previous year (www.wineinstitute.org). Notwithstanding, the massive and tragic wildfires in the Napa Valley region, California’s wine industry continues strong.

Equally strong is the interest in, appreciation of, and consumption by African Americans whose affinity for fine wines is celebrated during the annual Black Vines event, a salute to African American winemakers, with delectable food and culturally expressive art. Upwards of 400 patrons attended last year’s tasteful affair, states Fern A. Stroud, Black Vines Founder, “We created this event (in 2011) as a showcase for winemakers and an opportunity for guests—those new to wines or seasoned tasters—to celebrate African American culture. It is also a gathering place where trade connections are made and community fellowship is real. Proceeds from the event benefit area charities.”

The 2019 event returns to DeFremery Park (1651 Adeline Street) in West Oakland, Saturday, February 23, from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Held indoors, it is complemented by jazz music, heavy hors d’oeuvres, art and wine sampling, of course. A clip of the event can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/160055221>.

Highlighting African American winemakers is a focus of the event explains Stroud. “We see this event as an extension of their collective and independent outreach efforts to increase awareness, visibility and market demand for these labels.” There has been a steady loyalty factor borne out of the Black Vines annual event. The first wineries to showcase at Black Vines included Mac McDonald of Vision Cellars and Lou Garcia of

Stover Oaks. Shortly, Theodora Lee Esq., of Theopolis Wines (www.theopolisvineyards.com) joined the showcase event and a few years later, Paula Harrell of P. Harrell Wines (www.pharrellwines.com) too, became involved as a returning participant.

Today, some 20 winemakers showcase during this Black History Month event and the list of vintners is increasing.

About Black Vines

Founder, Fern A. Stroud: "I created Black Vines with Black excellence in mind. I wanted to bring the Oakland community together in a positive, uplifting setting to envision our future." Founded in 2011, by the Silicon Valley technology professional, Stroud's vision is in full effect. Black Vines is *A Toast to Black Wineries and Diverse Art™*.

The result is evident. Black Vines is California's preeminent curator of Black wine experiences and special events. Hosting an annual celebration of culture, art and wine education that brings together Black artists, Black musicians, Black winemakers and vintners; an outdoor summer soiree featuring delectable light fare paired with sparkling rosé, and sangria, on the last Saturday of February. Further, it has become a year-round itinerary of custom events in partnership with key influencers and industry specialists. To date, thousands of guests have been served from more than 130 varietals.

Expertise, quality and inclusivity remain at the forefront of the Black Vines vision.

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