

Lutz claims Blazing Pans title at annual food-wine fest



David Lutz and son Jacob after the big win.

More than 2,000 food and wine lovers came out for the 24th Lake Tahoe Autumn Food and Wine Festival last weekend, where they were treated to gourmet demonstrations, fine libations and dozens of delectable creations from some of Sierra Nevada's finest restaurants.

The festival, which took place at the Village at Northstar in Truckee, featured a special luncheon prepared by James Beard award-winning chef Traci Des Jardins, who is opening Manzanita inside The Ritz-Carlton Highlands, Lake Tahoe Dec. 9; a competitive grape stomp, wine tasting and luncheon cooked by Chef and Owner Mark Estee of Baxter's Bistro & Lounge; and the Blazing Pans Mountain Chef Cook-Off. This year's Chef David Lutz of Tahoe City's Evergreen Restaurant beat out his friend and colleague Mike Trombetta of Farm to Belly Personal Chef Services to take home the title of Blazing Pans Champion, after the judges favored Lutz's quail-themed dishes (this year's secret ingredient).

This year's Grand Tasting featured the food and wine

pairings of approximately 30 of the region's restaurants, caterers and premium wineries. Food and wine industry professionals, in a double blind judging, tasted and rated each pairing. Guests also had the opportunity to cast ballots for their favorite pairings in the coveted People's Choice Award. This year's winners are

Best Marriage of Food & Wine

Gold – Mamasake (Hamachi Sushi Cilantro, Yuzu, Hosho Ponzu, Cold Cucumber Soup), 2008 Evergreen Vineyard Columbia Valley Kung Fu Girl Riesling

Silver – Pianeta (Lamb Lollipops, Moroccan Spice Red Currant & Plum Sauce), 2006 Pride Mountain Vineyards Napa/Sonoma Merlot

Bronze – D'Lish Catering (Smoked Duck Corndog w Blackberry Maple Dijon Reduction), 2007 Silkwood Red Duet (Cab Sauv/Syrah) Lodi

Best White Wine

Gold – 2008 Evergreen Vineyard Columbia Valley Kung Fu Girl Riesling

Silver – 50/50 Brewing Rye IPA

Bronze – Kikisui Sake

Best Red Wine

Gold – 2005 Twomey Napa Valley Merlot

Silver – Silver Oak Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

Bronze (Tie) – 2006 Truckee River Winery Sta Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir Garys Vineyard and 2006 Inman Family Winery Russian River Valley OGV Pinot Noir

Best Food

Gold – Manzanita/ The Ritz-Carlton Highlands, Lake Tahoe (Pork Belly Sliders, Summer Pepper Preserve)

Silver – Mamasake (Hamachi Sushi Cilantro, Yuzu, Hosho Ponzu, Cold Cucumber Soup)

Bronze – Dâ€™Lish Catering (Smoked Duck Corndog w Blackberry Maple Dijon Reduction)

Best Dessert

Gold – Big Wave Catering (White Chocolate Bread pudding with Mission Figs)

Silver – Longboards Bar & Grill (Sticky Toffee Pudding Caramel & Chocolate Sauces Italian Marinated Cherries)

Bronze – Dâ€™Lish Catering (Pink Champagne Cake)

Peopleâ€™s Choice Awards

Best Marriage of Food & Wine

Big Wave Catering (White Chocolate Bread pudding with Mission Figs), 2005 Deerfield Ranch Late Harvest Botrytis Sauv. Blanc

Best White Wine

2008 Rombauer Carneros Chardonnay

Best Red Wine

2006 Pride Mountain Vineyards Napa/Sonoma Merlot

Best Food

Six Peaks Grille/Resort at Squaw Creek (Short Rib Patty Melt, Truffle Cheese, Huckleberry Jam)

Best Table Presentation

Dâ€™Lish Catering (Pink Champagne Cake)

Gruet New Mexico Sparkling Rose

The Lake Tahoe Autumn Food and Wine Festival is a fundraiser for the Community Fund of North Lake Tahoe through the 501c(3) Truckee Tahoe Community Foundation. The 24th annual festival is produced by the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association in partnership with Northstar-at-Tahoe; the Northstar Foundation; The Ritz-Carlton Destination Club; Audi of North America; Standards of Excellence Appliance Showrooms; Sunset magazine; Nothing to It Culinary Center in Reno; Charbay Winery and Distillery; and Tahoe Quarterly.