

Annual North Shore food-wine fest expands offerings

The 27th Lake Tahoe Autumn Food and Wine Festival, long considered one of the region's premier gourmet events, has increased the number of its programs – now offering nine days of festivities.

Another noticeable change to this year's festival is the expansion of the event to every corner of North Lake Tahoe. Visitors can literally pick and choose when and where to partake from the lake's West Shore to Kings Beach and even Truckee, Sept. 1-9.

New events include a Labor Day Weekend Barbecue and Music at West Shore Café and Inn in Homewood (Sept. 1), the Alpen Wine Fest at the Village at Squaw Valley (Sept. 2) and educational classes at Uncorked Wine Bar in the Village at Squaw Valley and at their Tahoe City location (Sept. 3 and 6).

Attendees also have an opportunity to shop, cook, learn and dine with chef and owner Douglas Dale of Wolfdale's Cuisine Unique in Tahoe City at his Farmer's Market/Hands-On Cooking Class (Sept. 6). Participants will shop locally with Dale, cook together and enjoy a four-course luncheon complete with wine pairings.

This year's event will also feature a first-time winemaker dinner at the famed Soule Domain in Crystal Bay (Sept. 6).

The Grape Stomp has changed location and will now be hosted at Tahoe City's Commons Beach and sponsored by Uncorked Tahoe City (Sept. 7).

Although the focus has traditionally been wine, this year's event will diverge featuring a unique beer class as part of its educational seminars on Saturday (Sept. 8) at the Village

at Northstar. The “Belgian Brews and Cheese Pairing” has renowned cheese expert Laura Werlin pairing Belgian-style and IPA-style beer with a variety of domestic cheeses.

Another new class that may pique the interest of festivalgoers is the “2012 Pacific Oyster Wine Pairing Winners” (Sept. 8), which will also be at the Village at Northstar.

Many of the festival’s free programs are also return for Sept. 8 at the Village at Northstar, including outdoor grilling and cooking seminars, gourmet marketplace, hands-on cooking and butchering demonstrations, as well as the ticketed Wine and Brew Walk and Blazing Pans Mountain Chef Cookoff and Charbay Artisan Winery and Distillery Release Party.

The pinnacle of the event, the Culinary Competition and Grand Tasting, returns (Sept. 9) at the Village at Northstar with more than 30 restaurants, caterers and chefs developing bite-sized dishes that pair perfectly with a single varietal or vintage wine, beer or spirits.

For more information about the Lake Tahoe Autumn Food and Wine Festival, a complete list of events and prices, special festival lodging packages and to purchase individual event tickets, go online.