

Sierra Salsa Showdown hot enough to melt snow

By Kathryn Reed

TWIN BRIDGES – Bottle it. It was that good.

Jerry Lee Marsh took home top honors April 22 at Sierra-at-Tahoe's Salsa Showdown. For his winning efforts he earned a 2017-18 season pass to the ski resort.

Jerry's Verde, as he called it, was one of 11 traditional salsas. Two fruit salsas were judged separately.

The six judges – all with a connection to Sierra except for this reporter – agreed Jerry's Verde was outstanding. It was thicker than a lot of green salsas. The heat was perfect – starts out mild, then has a strong finish, but not overpowering.

One judge suggested chopped avocado would enhance it, but not all were in agreement.

Now in its 10th year, this contest brings out locals and people throughout Northern California.



Tomatillos beat out tomatoes April 22 at the Sierra Salsa Showdown. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Jerry's Verde had close competition from Salsa Romo. It had great flavor without having to be hot. Some judges thought it might have had pickled veggies in it.

Doug Abbott of South Lake Tahoe came up with Smoky Bacon Salsa. He said the creation was an accident that he liked. It was the only one with meat in it. Abbott is a veteran of this contest, having won it a few years ago.

Allen Evangelista of San Francisco has been entering his salsas every year, even winning it a couple years back.

"It's an awesome tradition," Evangelista told *Lake Tahoe News* of the event. "This year I put honey in it." His Rainbow and Sunshine was near the top of the pack.

Teresa Elena Petersen of Meadow Vista was a first-time entrant with her Neña's Pico de Gallo.

"The secret to a good salsa my aunt Mercy told me is to chop everything finely, use salt and don't make it the last day," Petersen told *Lake Tahoe News*. "You need to let the juices of

fresh tomatoes sit.”

Winning the fruit salsa contest was Arica Davis, who now lives in South Lake Tahoe, after moving out from Louisiana.

Both fruit salsas were mango dominated, but Davis’ edged out her competitor’s because her flavors were more balanced and overall it tasted more like a true salsa. She also won a season pass.

It was all things Mexican-themed Sunday afternoon at the Golden Bear Terrace – with taco eating contests, a piñata for kids, and plenty of margaritas being mixed for the adults.

This is closing weekend for Sierra, with Monday being Customer Appreciation Day. Proceeds from the \$35 lift tickets will benefit youth recreation and education in South Lake Tahoe. All guests are invited to join General Manager John Rice and the rest of Sierra’s team for the official “last run of the season” from the top of Grandview Express beginning at 2pm. Last call at the Sierra Pub will be 2:45pm, in time for the ending of all winter operations at 3pm.