

# Vintners' Festival hits the streets

City opens up Pacific Avenue to welcome 24th annual festival and street fair

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SANTA CRUZ — Mark 2013 as the year Santa Cruz County's vintners came down from the mountain.

Hundreds of people packed Pacific Avenue in downtown Santa Cruz on Sunday for

the 24th annual Vintners' Festival "Roots That Rock" & Downtown Santa Cruz Street Faire. The event was so popular that some vendors ran out of varietals, and lines were routinely 20-deep as a diverse crowd clogged

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Kelton McMahon, Karin Ohman, Alex Nereson, Andrew Racz, Alanna Lecher and Claire Masteller sample wine on Pacific Avenue in downtown Santa Cruz during the 24th annual Vintners' Festival 'Roots That Rock' on Sunday.

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The Samba Stilt Circus livens up the wine-drinking crowd at the 24th annual Vintners' Festival 'Roots That Rock' in downtown Santa Cruz on Sunday.

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several blocks of closed-off streets.

"We really felt this event needed a change, and we wanted to make it a festival," said Megan Metz, executive director of the Santa Cruz Mountains Wine Grower's Association. "I think when you're out in the mountains it's a little more challenging to call it a festival. So we decided to bring it downtown to Santa Cruz this year and bring everyone together."

Sixteen wineries represented the county's growing industry. The event is part of two-weekend affair, with San Jose and San Mateo counties represented during a festival held last weekend.

The event still includes on-site barrel tastings and winery tours, but 2013 was the first time the event included a street fair. Rather than cruise from winery to winery, patrons could buy an \$8 souvenir wine glass, with tastings costing \$1 each, and sample several wines in one spot, without the travel.

"I think it's been a very popular event. I think it's very well-coordinated," said Stephen Storrs of Storrs Winery, who also ran out of one varietal. "We've done a lot of street fairs around the Bay Area, and they can be really fun and really vibrant. And that's what we're seeing

with this one."

Bargetto, Burrell School and many other of the county's prominent wineries were on hand. So were vendors selling everything from oysters to chocolate, giving those who wanted one a chance for a decadent afternoon.

The crowd ran the gamut from young to old, from hipsters to the silver-haired set. Musicians, such as a up-and-coming songwriter Ameer Chapman, provided musical entertainment, and there was plenty of good food to be had as well.

"We're just about trying them all," said Thomas Figueroa, who came to the event from Salinas with his wife, Ann.

"We wanted to try the fruit wines down at Bargetto's, but they were out," Ann Figueroa said.

It is extremely rare that part of Santa Cruz's main commercial street is shut down, but Metz said the city was very helpful in facilitating the event.

"This has been a great success. We're really happy," Metz said.

Burrell School's Dave Moulton, president of the Mountains Wine Grower's Association, concurred.

"Nothing but happy people," Moulton said. "A lot of positive comments out there today."

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