

Atlantic City Food and Wine Festival 2009—The Grand Market

August 3rd, 2009 | Author: [Mark](#)



This past weekend, my wife and I attended one hell of a party in Atlantic City, New Jersey – the Atlantic City Food and Wine Festival. Fortunately for us, this party was almost in our backyard and would only require a 1-1/2 hour drive up the Atlantic City Expressway. Oops! Did I just say an hour and a half drive? What I really meant to say was more like a 3 hour crawl to the party!

It was a gorgeous Saturday morning in the Northeast, and it sure didn't take long for the AC Expressway to start looking more like a crowded mall parking lot at Christmas time as a legion of motorists crept along at a snail's pace heading for Atlantic City and the Jersey shore.



Upon finally arriving and parking on the rooftop at Bally's, my wife and I immediately noticed something new in the Atlantic City Casino skyline- Wind Mills. The addition of the Wind Mills was something that was new to us, so that should tell you how long it has been since our last trip to Atlantic City.

Once inside the Bally's hotel, we picked up our passes and proceeded into the Main Ballroom of the hotel that was completely transformed into a bustling market place that showcased a variety of different food creations, as well as countless different types of wine and spirits

to choose from. And believe me when I mean to tell you that this place was bustling. It was packed to the gills with food and wine lovers!

This shindig was so crowded, that they're should have been a large sign at the entrance reading – "GRAB A WINE GLASS AND GUARD IT WITH YOUR LIFE"! tBecause a clean wine glass at this party was mighty hard to come by.

Here were some of my favorite moments at this year's soiree, in no particular order.

Moment #1: The Wine

The vino at the party was pretty good, but there were a few standouts that flat out knocked our taste buds silly.



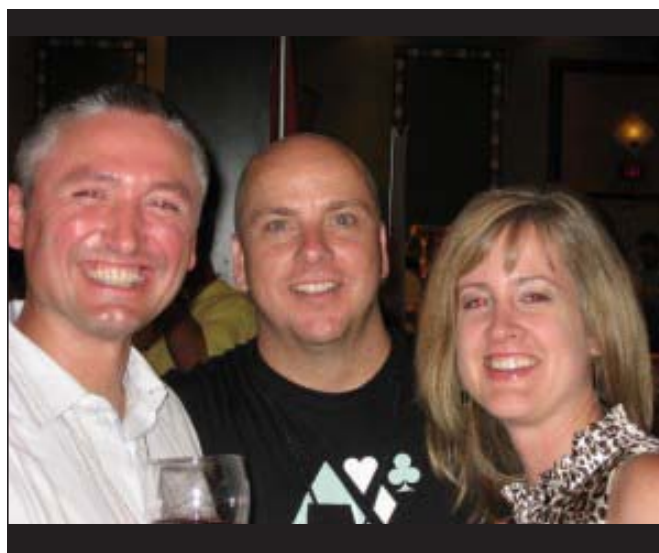
First, was a very accessible Sauvignon Blanc from Marlborough, New Zealand. We sampled the 2008 Whitehaven Sauvignon Blanc, and we were blown away by it's New Zealand styling. If you enjoy New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, then it doesn't get much better than this in my opinion. This wine retails for about \$20, and is very easy to find anywhere.

Two other standouts were a couple of Pinot Noirs from Fulcrum Wines in California. My wife and I had the pleasure of tasting both the 2007 Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (Only 1200 bottles produced) and the 2007 La Encantada (Only 600 bottles produced). Both wines were incredible, but the highlight of this particular tasting was when a rather inebriated fellow came up and was denied a taste of these terrific wines because he handed the wine rep a plastic "shot glass" that still had about a 1/3 left of chardonnay or some Malibu Bay drink still left in it. Kudos to her for calling a foul on the field and not pouring!



Finally, our favorite wine at the party came from a new California wine company called JAQK Cellars. My wife and I were completely floored by one of their wines and found another of their offerings to be pretty damn good too. In our opinion, the wine that ran the table at this year's festival was the 2006 Napa Valley JAQK Cellars Soldiers Of Fortune Shiraz. This wine is made up of 100% Shiraz from Napa's Carneros region and was completely awesome and delicious. The only negative thing to say about this wine is that there are only 271 cases to go around – probably even less now. So if you want some of this killer stuff, I'd recommend contacting them pronto! The other JAQK wine that we absolutely loved was the 2006 High Roller Cabernet Sauvignon.

Thanks to David and Jeff for coming to the festival and sharing this new and exciting line.



Here we are with David: As you can see by our big wine smiles, we really liked both of the wines a lot.

Moment #2: The Food



Of course, there was plenty of food to eat for everyone! With some of the best chefs in town, no one was going home hungry!

One of our favorite food moments at this year's festival was being treated to an incredible octopus appetizer by one of the greatest chefs on the planet – Mr. George Perrier. Trust me when I tell you that this octopus creation by Mr. Perrier was insanely delicious. My wife loved it so much, that she wanted to show the legendary chef her gratitude!

Ummm... excuse me Mr. Perrier, may I please have my wife back?



So as the missus was contemplating leaving this "Poor Man's Chef" for a terrific, filthy rich chef – I thought that I would go over and say hello to a chef that I could really relate to – Mr. Tony Luke, Jr. of Tony Luke's Old Philly Style Sandwiches.

I've got one word for you my friend – CHEESESTEAK! Or maybe two – GREATEST CHEESESTEAK! Now this was truly a great moment captured on film – The Poor Man's Chef meets the World's Greatest Cheesesteak

Maker! Thanks Tony! I love you Man! I'm starting to tear up a little...



Moment #3: The Entertainment

No party would be complete without the entertainment. There were lots of great celebrity chefs at this party, but there was a “Guy” that set this Ballroom on fire. No, that’s not Billy Idol – it’s the other “Guy” with bleached, spiky hair. Now, this my friend is how you make a grand entrance at a party!



The place erupted when mega-star chef Guy Fieri made his way in to do a book signing on Saturday. It was like Elvis taking the stage. The crowd on hand was electrified.

So there you have it, some of our magical moments at this year’s Atlantic City Food and Wine Festival. We really had a blast and we look forward to attending it next year!

Thank you to all involved for organizing this great event. I would like to give a very special thanks to both Shara and Casey. Thank you both for your assistance and kind generosity.

Cheers!