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CONSUMER DEMAND FOR AUTHENTIC CERTIFIED OLIVE OIL ON THE RISE

Amid Dramatic Growth in the Industry, the California Olive Oil Council Sponsors First-Ever Olive Oil Competition at the San Diego Bay Wine and Food Festival

Berkeley, California (November 22, 2006) With the California olive oil industry growing almost one-third in acreage in the last two years and consumer demand for authentic, certified olive oil on the rise (U. S. domestic sales up 20 % each year for the last five years), the California Olive Oil Council (COOC) sponsored the first annual olive oil competition of the San Diego Bay Wine and Food Festival, southern California's largest wine and food event this month.

Top awards were swept by Pasolivo, a family ranch nestled in the hills of Paso Robles on the central coast of California, winning a Best of Show in both the extra virgin olive oil and flavored oil categories. The family's Pasolivo-Tuscan blend won Best of Show in the extra virgin olive oil category and Pasolivo-Lime won Best of Show in the flavored oil category. Pasolivo produces estate grown and pressed oils. Visit their website at www.pasolivo.com. For a list of all of the award winners, please visit www.cooc.com

The spectacular festival included its first-ever olive oil competition, wine tasting seminars, a reserve wine tasting, cooking classes and the all day consumer event featuring the COOC olive oil tasting tent as well as an array of wine tasting stations and exquisitely prepared delicacies presented by 50 of the finest chefs from San Diego, La Jolla and Baja California.

The competition, held on November 10, was led by California Olive Oil Council Taste Panel Leaders, Nancy Ash, Louie Gonzalez and Arden Kremer This talented team, with over 25 years of tasting experience, has received panel supervision certification from the International Olive Council in Madrid (IOC). Joined by San Diego chefs Joaquin Cueva and David Chenelle, the judges tasted 59 oils that were submitted in both the extra virgin and flavored oil category.

Following the judging, the oils were displayed and tasted by 1,000 attendees at the COOC tasting tent on Saturday, November 11. With more than 100 varietals grown in the sunshine state, the array of lovely, fragrant oils created a stir among the many food lovers in attendance. Savvy attendees discovered the importance of fresh olive oil from California producers and the difference it can make in their menus and meals.

The California Olive Oil Council's Seal is awarded only to authentic, certified extra virgin olive oils made from California-grown olives. The COOC seal certification provides consumers and retailers with an assurance of quality. The COOC encourages consumers to look for its seal on the bottle when they shop for extra virgin olive oil.

About the California Olive oil Council

The COOC was founded in 1992 and is a non-profit trade and marketing association whose purpose is to promote the growing of olives and the production of olive oil in California. The COOC supports certified olive oil standards and provides grower, producer and consumer education.

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