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Media Contact:

media@calexpo.com

Sanjida Nahar, snahar@actumllc.com

California State Fair Announces Winners of the 2024 Commercial Extra Virgin Olive Oil Competition

SACRAMENTO — The California State Fair proudly announces the winners of the highly anticipated 2024 Commercial Extra Virgin Olive Oil Competition. This prestigious event celebrates the excellence and diversity of California's olive oil industry, showcasing the finest products from across the state. The competition is open only to Extra Virgin and Flavored Olive Oils made from 100% olives which are grown, milled and packaged in California.

With a record number of entries this year, Head Judge, Sue Langstaff, and a panel of 15 sensory evaluation judges faced the daunting task of selecting the best of the best. Each entry was rigorously evaluated based on aroma, flavor, and overall quality, adhering to the highest standards of olive oil assessment.

Langstaff, renowned for her contributions to the field is the principal of Applied Sensory, LLC, and brings extensive expertise in sensory evaluation. She has judged all over the world, including at the Los Angeles International, New Zealand and South African Extra Virgin Olive Oil Awards. Langstaff co-edited "Olive Oil Sensory Science" (Wiley/Blackwell, 2014) and developed The Defects Wheel® for Olive Oil, Beer, and Wine. Langstaff holds a M.S. in Food Science with a specialization in Sensory Science from UC Davis.

Langstaff says of the competition, "The competition is a wonderful venue to showcase the world class quality of California olive oils. Producers are able to compare the quality of their oils with those of their peers. Our judges provide un-biased feedback on the oils which can help all California producers. Folks attending the California State Fair can taste some of the best olive oils that California has to offer."

After careful deliberation, the California State Fair is delighted to present the following awards:

****Best of Show:****

- Monovarietal Show: Marcum Olive Oil, Itrana
- Blend Show: San Miguel Olive Farm, Tuscan Gold Magnifico
- Flavored Show: Corto, Argrumato-Method Lemongrass & Basil

The 2024 Best of Show Monovarietal Extra Virgin Olive Oil is an Itrana variety Olive Oil, by Marcum Olive Oil of Paso Robles, CA. The Itrana olive hails from the Italian region of Lazio. This extra virgin olive oil grown on the Marcum estate, has a beautiful green color, smooth buttery/fruity flavor with hints peaches and green olives. Marcum Olive Oil maintains a sustainable growing method, free of pesticides, that promotes a healthy balance in the soil, and surrounding wildlife. Grant Marcum, owner of Marcum Olive says, "A lot of time and effort goes into maintaining a hands-on, sustainable growing method that promotes a balanced soil, while



producing the highest quality olive oil, that not only tastes great, but is also good for your health. I am honored and thankful to receive the Best of Show from the California State Fair."

The 2024 Best of Show Extra Virgin Olive Oil Blend is Tuscan Gold Magnifico by San Miguel Olive Farm of San Miguel, CA. Richard Meisler and his wife, Myrna, owners of San Miguel Olive Farm went from working in music industry to dedicating the last quarter of their lives to growing olives in west San Miguel, CA. Tuscan Gold Magnifico is an early harvest blend of Pendolino, Maurino and Leccino olives. The Meislers say they are, "Honored, to be part of California's best."

The 2024 Best of Show Flavored Olive Oil is an Agrumato-Method Lemongrass & Basil Olive Oil by Corto, of Lodi, CA. Competition Judges raved about the oil's, "Balanced, elegant and perfumed aroma. That's some nice oil in there too!" The Agrumato process involves simultaneously crushing fresh seasonal ingredients with fresh olives, which marries the flavors together, capturing the freshness of each ingredient. Juan Polari, Technical Service Manager of Corto says, "We are immensely honored and grateful for receiving this recognition, this achievement stands as a testament to the unwavering dedication, passion, and tireless efforts exhibited by every member of the Corto Team."

****Best of California:****

- Medium Intensity Monovarietal EVOO: Wild Groves, Ascolano
- Robust Intensity Monovarietal EVOO: Marcum Olive Oil, Itrana
- Delicate Intensity EVOO Blend: U.C. Davis Olive center, Premium Reserve
- Medium Intensity EVOO Blend: San Miguel Olive Farm, Tuscan Gold Magnifico
- Robust Intensity EVOO Blend: Campodonico Olive Farm, Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Co-Milled Flavored Olive Oil: Corto, Agrumato-Method Lemongrass & Basil
- Infused Flavored Olive Oil: Sutter Buttes Natural & Artisan Foods, Citrus Habanero
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil by a Micro-producer: Campodonico Olive Farm, Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil by an Artisan Producer: Bondolio, Organic Estate Blend
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil by a Large Producer: Séka Hills, Estate Coratina

New for this year's competition the "Friend to the Consumer Award," honors labeling which exemplifies education and disclosure to the consumer. The labels are evaluated for information about provenance, freshness assurance, tasting and flavor Notes, and use notes. The inaugural winners are Olive Crush Farms of Valley Springs, CA and Organic Roots of Maxwell, CA.

"We are thrilled to honor the outstanding craftsmanship and dedication of California's olive oil producers," said Michelle Johnson, Olive Oil Program Coordinator for the California State Fair. "The winners represent the pinnacle of excellence in the industry, and their commitment to quality continues to elevate California's reputation as a world-class olive oil producer."

The California State Fair extends its congratulations to all the winners of the 2024 Commercial Extra Virgin Olive Oil Competition. Their achievements underscore the richness and diversity of California's agricultural landscape.



During the 2024 California State Fair, July 12 - 28, fair guests will enjoy an exhibit featuring award-winning flavored and extra virgin olive oils with free sampling, tasting classes, and the opportunity to purchase olive oil directly from award-winning California producers.

Complete results and competition information can be found on the California State Fair website at www.CAStateFair.org

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