

COUNTRY WEEKLY®

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Guest Post: Alan Jackson's Daughter Mattie Finds Similar Passion in Songwriting and Winemaking

TRAINED SOMMELIER REPORTS FROM "NAPA IN NASHVILLE" FUNDRAISER.

Mattie Jackson | Published: Mar 07, 2014



The first memory I have of seeing my father cry I shared with millions of people. Tears not just from the painful subject of "Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)" that hung hauntingly in the air of the Grand Ole Opry house in 2001, but tears of passion and joy for this song he had crafted. More than a track on an album, a piece of him went into those verses, those chords. A piece of him that would be forever shared with every listener.

For all of us raised in Music City, we know well the humble expertise and quiet perseverance of Nashville's songwriters, many of whom may never be able to personally perform their greatest works for the world. And with a childhood inundated with the country music industry and my cellar position with Napa Valley's Joseph Phelps Vineyards for the 2013 harvest, I have found the same joy in knowing some of California's most passionate, unspoken winemakers as I have watching our songwriters find success behind the scenes of Nashville's biggest artists.

- 1 Photo Courtesy Mattie Jackson

Though few may ever reach fame and recognition outside of their local arena, songwriters and winemakers alike live for their craft and craft for their lifetime. In honor of artists in both music and winemaking, NOTES for Education

sponsored its second annual “Napa in Nashville” event at the Hard Rock Cafe Thursday, March 6, bringing California winemakers together with our cherished Nashville songwriters for an evening of food, wine and country music for a good cause.

Though only the event’s second year in Music City, NOTES for Education has sponsored a sister event, Nashville in Napa, for the past five years. Founded by Nashville producer Frank Rogers and Napa Valley winemaker Debi Cali, NOTES is a non-profit organization established to unite professionals in the music and wine industries as a means of sharing their stories and their crafts with young artists of tomorrow. Benefits from the 2013 “Napa in Nashville” went to the Grammy Foundation, Glenview Elementary School, Hume-Fogg and Wilson Central, as well as other local youth music programs.

Sponsored by NOTES, ASCAP, WSM online radio, BNA Wine Group and Baldacci Family Vineyards, among others, this year’s roster included five great country songwriters, five exclusive Napa Valley wineries and BNA Wine Group, a unique, Nashville-based wine-production company bridging the gap between West Coast viticulture and Southern hospitality.

The three-hour, two-set performance spotlighted the special, shared artisanship between songwriters and winemakers, as well as the comprehensive range of diversity among Nashville’s musical community. The show included classic artists like David Lee Murphy, whose hits span from his 1995 hit single “Party Crowd” to recent hits for artists including Kenny Chesney, Jason Aldean and Thompson Square.

Fieri new duo Striking Matches shared the stage with Murphy and established writers Jonathan Singleton and Jon Randall Stewart, and local painter/songwriter Ray Stephenson, blowing away guests with their rich, bluesy sound and hauntingly honest lyricism. Both recent Belmont graduates, Striking Matches’ Sarah Zimmerman and Justin Davis have enjoyed four Grand Ole Opry performances and two singles featured on ABC’s Nashville since they began playing together just four years ago.

Participating winemakers provided the perfect sips to complement the show, pouring delicate wines from the cool Carneros region in southern Napa Valley all the way to bold Calistoga Cabernets from the north. From Baldacci Family Vineyards and Mi Sueno’s focus on wine as a family legacy to Phifer Pavitt’s “Date Night” Cabernet and Trespass Vineyards’ roots in romance and Ca’Momi’s New World homage to its Italian roots, these five winemakers shared their stories with guests, showcasing each of their bottles as if they’d landed a new, chart-topping No. 1.

Proceeds from “Napa in Nashville” totaled \$10,000 with 150 guests attending, an all-time high for this series of fundraisers. For more on the participating wineries and how to visit their properties and purchase their wines, visit voluptuousvines.com.

Mattie Jackson, certified specialist of wine, lives in Austin, Texas, and is currently pursuing her passion for wine and creative writing through her blog, VoluptuousVines, and working as a sales representative and consultant for a boutique Italian wine import company.

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