

# The Press Democrat

## 2024 Harvest Fair olive oil winners named

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JENNIFER GRAUE July 30, 2024

## Sebastopol olive orchard takes home top Harvest Fair honors

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The Sonoma County Harvest Fair olive oil competition is the first contest of the year to be judged for the premier agricultural event, which also includes competitions for food and wine.]



Gold Ridge Organic Farm's Picholine olive oil took home Best of Show in the Sonoma County Harvest Fair's 2024 olive oil competition. Brooke Hazen grows 70 acres of olives at Gold Ridge Organic Farms in west Sonoma County. (Photo by John Burgess/The Press Democrat) 2021

A Sebastopol olive orchard and mill has captured top honors in the 2024 Sonoma County Harvest Fair olive oil competition, fair organizers announced last week.

Gold Ridge Organic Farms won Best of Show for its Picholine blend, an extra virgin oil made up of six different French olive cultivars.

The 88-acre farm has 13,000 olive trees and includes French, Italian and Spanish varieties as well as an on-site mill which produces the oils in small batches.

Gold Ridge also captured a Double Gold medal for its Meyer lemon olive oil, which is a blend of Spanish olive varieties co-milled with estate-grown citrus.

“We are blessed with one of the best growing environments for producing world-class olive oils,” said farmer Brooke Hazen, owner of Gold Ridge Farm situated in the rolling hills just south of Sebastopol.

In all, there were 12 Double Gold winners out of the 37 olive oils entered into this year’s competition.

Bill Traverso has judged the competition for several years and said the number of Double Gold and Gold medal winners is a testament to how quality has improved throughout the olive oil competition’s 25 year history.

“I’ve tasted a lot of olive oils,” said Traverso, who tasted all around Europe in his role at Santa Rosa’s gone but not forgotten Traverso’s Market. “We’re starting to bring our Sonoma County oils up to the level of those in Italy and France who have a long tradition of making oils.”

The other Double Gold winners include Trattore Farms and Winery in Healdsburg with four awards for its Meyer lemon, Valencia orange, basil and jalapeño oils; Il Fusti Olive Oil & Vinegar in Sebastopol with two awards for its Taggiasca and jalapeño oils; The Olive Press in Sonoma with two awards for its basil and jalapeño flavored oils; and Bricoleur Vineyards and Orsi Family Vineyards with one award each for their olive oil blends.

Traverso went on to say how impressed he was with the flavored oil entries.

“The quality of the flavored olive oils are tremendous,” he said. “It’s one of those things, you smell it and you know exactly what it is. They’re spot on.”

Some winning olive oils will be available to taste at Harvest Fair’s “Taste, Toast & Celebrate!” from 6-9 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 12. The event at Grace Pavilion is the Harvest Fair’s gala celebration featuring winners of this year’s wine, food and olive oil competitions.

Guests at the \$80 per person, cocktail attire event will in attendance as the top three sweepstakes winning wines of the coveted Harvest Fair awards are unveiled at the event.

Entries for both the amateur and professional wine competition are open until Aug. 23 and 30, respectively. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit [harvestfair.org](http://harvestfair.org).

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