

Havenhill Lavender Farm celebrates the French-country way

Thousands come to learn, enjoy the savory herb

BY DANIELLE KUEHNEL
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SILVERTON – It's been five years since Havenhill's first French Harvest Lavender Festival at Tom and Trina Stoffel's lavender farm in the heart of Silverton's lush landscape.

And in those few years, the event has grown from including a few hundred to attracting a few thousand.

"It went really well this year," said Trina Stoffel. "We had about 1,650 people come to the festival, and everyone had a very nice time."



Danielle Kuehnel / Appeal Tribune

Roseann Maurer, 19, and sister Rachel, 15, tediously create lavender wands, good for scenting cars, drawers or closets. The Mount Angel duo have been helping the Stoffers with the Lavender Festival for three years.

Visitors to the lavender farm were able to partake in several activities including browsing the myriad antiques in Havenhill's barn provided by Je T'aime, sipping wines from local vintner Silver Falls Vineyards, tasting lavender-laced goodies from Cakewalk Specialty Baking or even harvesting their own buckets of Buena Vista lavender from the Stoffels' crops.

"I just love the fragrance of lavender," said visitor Dodie Blessing of Umpqua. "The colors are unique, and you really can do a lot with it."

Blessing came to the Silverton festival with her friend Roni Borlek. Borlek, definitely a lavender connoisseur, explained lavender's unique versatility, using the herb for lotions, soaps and even marinades for fish and poultry.

"My favorite, though, is the lavender martini," she gushed. "I had to pry the recipe out of a Portland bartender."

Blessing and Borlek also enjoyed the abundance of Jacquie Meier's antiques. Borlek even walked away with several glass vases.

“I go for cottage-style shabby-chic,” said Meier. “The antiques are just so beautiful.”

Je T’aime has brought its antiques to the festival for the past five years, since the beginning of the Havenhill festival. Although the antiques were only a weekend attraction at Havenhill, they looked perfectly at home in the Stoffels’ vintage-styled barn.

Guests also enjoyed cooking demonstrations on Saturday and Sunday by Chef Jeff Nizlek of Silverton’s Silver Grille French bistro.

“People were very intrigued by the cooking classes,” said Stoffel. “Many people think it’s unusual to incorporate lavender into their foods.”

Silver Falls Vineyards, Cakewalk Specialty Baking and Countryman Public House encouraged visitors of all ages to try not only local cuisine, but also a wide variety of lavender foodstuffs for the curious.

Children and adults alike enjoyed Jessica Griffin’s goodies from her Cakewalk Bakery for another year, such as crisp lavender shortbread, lavender rum cake, lavender scones and even rich to-die-for lavender-chocolate ganache cupcakes, and those of-age were afforded tastes of Silver Falls Vineyards’ varieties of pinot noirs, Riesling, pinot gris and even their specialty “Sublime” dessert wine.

In the evenings, guests were entertained with live music in the outdoor food pavilion.

But of particular interest to many visitors were the Lavender 101 classes Trina taught in the early afternoons.

“Adding the educational component to the festival was very beneficial for people visiting the farm,” Stoffel said. “It was very well received. They asked a lot of specific questions, and I was able to tell people how to care for lavender plants.”

Next year, Stoffel plans to add more educational opportunities for visitors, and perhaps even extend the festival’s hours to go further into the evening.

“It would be great for people to enjoy the food and music a bit later,” she said.

People who came to the festival not only savored the sweet aromas and edible treats, but also contributed to a local cause.

The festival raised \$545 for Silverton Area Community Aid (SACA, the local food bank) from those who parked in the Havenhill cleared-out field.

Visit the Stoffels online 24 hours a day at Hvenhilllavender.com for facts about the flavorful herb or to order any of their lush handmade lavender products.