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JUDGES DECLARE INCREASE IN QUALITY AT THE GOOD FOOD AWARDS' LARGEST NATIONAL CRAFT FOOD TASTING TO DATE

150 renowned chefs, journalists and food producers gathered to taste 1,366 responsibly made products at the 3rd annual Blind Tasting.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (October 30, 2012) – The Good Food Awards held its annual Blind Tastings on October 14th and October 21st with **150 judges** from across the country and as far as London tasting entries from nine categories and **49 states**. Over the course of the two Tastings **more than 1,350 entries were sampled**, hailing from some of the most celebrated beer, coffee, chocolate, cheese, spirits, preserves, pickles and confections producers in the country.

Across the board the judges were impressed by the extent of craftsmanship present this year. Returning judges, including *The Wall Street Journal's* "Slow Food, Fast" columnist Kitty Greenwald, remarked on an overall increase in excellence. Standouts and favorites ranged from tarragon pickled cherries and a wild thimbleberry jam, to kale kimchi and a variety of "stunning" blue cheeses.

Discussion was long at the Beer Tasting as judges were hard pressed to come up with a consensus on only five finalists from each region amongst a panoply of outstanding beers. From hoppy IPAs to brews flavored with everything from persimmons to chamomile, both classic and inventive drafts scored high in an industry where creativity and diversity characterize the American contribution to a traditional craft practiced around the world.

Purity and harmony of flavors were strong trends amongst this year's entries. Preserves Judge Nell Newman, philanthropist and Founder of Newman's Own Organics, emphasized capturing "the essence of the [ingredient] without overpowering it with too many competing flavors."

Charcuterie Judge* and Founder of Fra-Mani Handcrafted Foods, Paul Bertolli was impressed by the "renaissance" of American charcuterie and said of the Tasting, "To have a body that is arbitrating taste is exciting for people who want to try new things. And then when people hear about what goes into it, the sustainable factor, they feel good...[The Good Food Awards is] only in its third year and it's really showing traction."

ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS

The 150 finalists from five regions of the country will be publicly announced the third week of November, and the 100 winners will gather at San Francisco's Ferry Building to be honored at a gala ceremony (Friday, January 18th, tickets \$95) and public marketplace (Saturday, January 19th, tickets \$5) hosted in collaboration with the CUESA farmers market. In the interim, the Good Food Awards website

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and social media pages will release video clips and images from the Tasting.

The Good Food Awards, the annual celebration of the Good Food Merchants Guild (www.goodfoodmerchantsguild.org), is a Seedling Projects initiative to honor the work of craft food producers across the country. The Awards bring attention to American businesses crafting excellent food with an eye toward sustainability and social responsibility. The Good Food Awards are organized by Seedling Projects in collaboration with a broad community of food producers, chefs, food writers and passionate food-lovers.

ABOUT SEEDLING PROJECTS

Seedling Projects, a California public benefit corporation, is led by Sarah Weiner and Dominic Phillips, who have united their diverse skills to support the sustainable food movement. Through focused events and strategic models it engages the public in finding better ways to feed our communities. Find more information at: www.seedlingprojects.org

*To prevent a conflict of interest, Paul Bertolli was excluded from judging charcuterie from the West region in which his company's products were entrants.

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