

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

TEXAS OLIVE OILS SHINE AT THREADGILL'S SHOWCASE

Packed venue indicative of public support for burgeoning Texas olive oil industry

Austin, Texas- March 28, 2011- The booming olive oil industry in South-Central Texas was on display Saturday, March 26 in front of large and enthusiastic audience of foodies at Threadgill's in Austin. Olive growers from all over Texas were on hand to find out how Texas compares to quality olive oils from Italy, Spain and Argentina, countries recognized as the top producers in the world.

Celebrating a banner Texas harvest in 2010, the First Annual Texas Olive Tasting & Showcase was a clear indication of how far the struggles and determination of growers like Texas olive pioneer Jim Henry have taken this new industry. "I'm delighted to see so much interest in Texas olive oil and such a large crowd at this event" said Henry, "and it's great too see that what we've been doing is now supporting efforts in Northern Mexico to plant olive orchards."

Texas Olive Ranch took second and third place in the large producer category with their Arbosana varietal olive oil and their Grove Master's Blend, respectively, although the panel of judges still chose an Italian olive oil over the Texas olive oil contenders. Azienda Guarino (an estate olive oil from Sicily, Italy) took the #1 spot in the competition overall. "This is still a great day for Texas", insisted Antonio Guarino representing Azienda Guarino. "Texas is definitely going to be a world class contender in the years to come." Jeff Conarko, owner of Con' Olio Oils & Vinegars in Austin, coordinated the Showcase.

In the Artisan Grower Category, Jewett Farms from Moulton, Texas was awarded 1st place with their oil milled from a mix of Frantoio, Arbequina, Leccino, Picual, and Mission olives. "This was unexpected", said a surprised Dunham Jewett from Houston, Texas. "2010 was the first harvest from our trees that we were able to press into olive oil". Second place was awarded to Bel-Asher Olive Oil from Asherton, Texas, from 100 year old trees of unknown variety that inspired olive growers to plant again in the Carrizo Springs area. Third place honors were awarded to Qualia Orchard Olive Oil in Del Rio, Texas, part of the Val Verde Winery estate, the oldest winery in Texas.

"All of the olive oils represented in the showcase are winners because for the last 50 years anyone who wanted to grow olives in Texas has been told it wasn't possible," said Henry. "Now we know it is not only possible to grow olives, it is possible to make a world class olive oil with a Texas crop of olives."

The crowd also previewed a rough cut of "El Camino, the Texas | Mexico Olive Trail," a documentary film produced and directed by Bill Millet, coming to PBS stations June 2011. Segments of the Judging and Showcase were shot for inclusion in the documentary. www.texasmexicoolivetrail.com/

The First Annual Texas Olive Oil Tasting & Showcase was presented by the Texas Olive Oil Council www.texasoliveoilcouncil.org/ and Threadgill's in Austin.

First Annual Texas Olive Oil Tasting & Showcase Participants (March 26, 2011)

Judges:

- Jeff Conarko (owner, Con' Olio Oils & Vinegars)
- Virginia Wood (Food Editor, Austin Chronicle)
- Kathleen Scott (Writer, San Antonio Express News)
- Scott Boruff (Executive Director, Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.)
- Tracy Dufault (HEB Stores, Carbs & Oils BDM)
- Elsa Gramola (Celebrity Chef @ Central Market, from Sicily, Italy)
- Don Jesus Ramon (Ciudad Acuña, Mexico)
- Don Maurovio Cordonedo (Resistencia, Argentina)
- Don Ricardo Reguera Blanco (León, Spain)

Producers

- Texas Olive Ranch (Carrizo Springs, Texas)
- Anderson's Olive Farm (Dilley, Texas)
- Sandy Oaks (Elmendorf, Texas)
- Farrell's Olive Orchard (Artesia Wells, Texas)
- Azienda Guarino (Partanna, Sicily, Italy)
- Indalo Extra Virgin Olive Oil (Catamarca, Argentina)
- Villa Blanca Extra Virgin Olive Oil (Seville, Spain) certified organic
- Rancho La Espiga (Ciudad Acuña, Mexico)
- Jewett Farms (Moulton, Texas)
- Corpus Christi Olive Oil (from cir. 1942 olive trees)
- Bel-Asher Olive Oil (Asherton, Texas from cir. 1914 olive trees)
- Qualia Orchard (Del Rio, Texas)
- Tejeda Middle School Olive Oil (San Antonio, Texas)