

One sweet festival

February 6, 2020



Winter Art and Chocolate Festival returns for 15th year

Arguably the sweetest festival in southwestern Oregon is back for its 15th consecutive year — the Winter Art and Chocolate Festival.

The event is set for 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Feb. 8 and 9 at Kalmiopsis Elementary School, 650 Easy St., Brookings.

Chocolate and art lover David Willhite started the festival and has been organizing it ever since.

Artists and fine crafters from around the region will be joined by gourmet chocolate makers for this once-a-year extravaganza.

“It’s a high-quality art and crafts show,” Willhite said, “that enriches the community.”

Some of the chocolate vendors Willhite highlighted include:

- Coastal Mist Chocolatier from Bandon

Trained in one of Belgium's many chocolate shops, Chef's Kevin and Tara Shaw along with their protege-turned-business partner, Nicole, offer a sumptuous selection of gourmet truffles, tumbled (dragee) chocolates, pastries and desserts. They opened their retail store in Bandon in 2009 and continue to delight customers far and wide.

- Alchemy Bliss, Chocolatier

Joyce Brandon, a self-styled chocolate alchemist, combines organic chocolate with exotic combinations of spices, fruit and even cheese to create a flavor sensation that can only be described as “transcendent.” The complex arrangement of flavors embraces the senses, changing, melding and evoking memories and feelings. Willhite says to be sure to “get there early to try her Mango-Chili-Lime truffle, a life-changing cacophony of flavors that play like a symphony across your tastebuds.”

- Old Agness Store

Michele Berlant will challenge your idea of what makes a "brownie" with her selection of brownies, blondies and bars, both traditional and spicy. Ask her about her gluten-free items and her classical music CD.

- The Makery

Heather Harris will tempt you with her chocolate-dipped bacon. Try out her peanut butter cups, caramels and a smorgasbord of chocolate-dipped treats.

- Chocolates of Oregon

Chocolates of Oregon offers a wide selection of fine chocolates and confections, including turtles, truffles, chocolate-dipped nuts, jelly sticks, velvets, toffee, salted caramels and more. All made with Guittard Chocolate, the first and finest chocolate maker on the West Coast.

Willhite spotlighted a couple of new vendors:

- Gardens of Glass by Leah Fairbanks

“This young lady is the best glass artist we’ve seen anywhere,” Willhite says, offering hand-blown glass seashells, vases, berries and jewelry. Don't miss out on these spectacular handmade items, they're sure to fly off the shelf.

- Oregon Rocks!

They will rock your world, or at least your windows with hanging "window art" made from translucent slabs of crystalline stone. Oregon Rocks also offers rock and gem necklaces.

- Re-Wined

Ron Brackett will be selling classy, up-cycled wine barrel art and furnishings. These original wine-barrel pieces can add the perfect touch to your home decor, and being made from oak, will last a lifetime.

Willhite said artists and chocolatiers think highly of this festival and the people that it draws.

“It’s important to support artists this time of year,” Willhite said. “Vendors have said this is one of the highest quality shows they go to.”