

Preston chardonnay wins grand prize

Preston Wine Cellars of Pasco won the grand prize at the Enological Society of the Pacific Northwest contest held Monday in Seattle.

Preston's winner was a 1977 chardonnay.

The wine was called "a once in a lifetime wine" by Darrel Corti, one of the judges who tasted 46 wines from 16 wineries from Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

The five-year-old Seattle contest, that attracted 2,000 guests had never awarded a grand prize before.

"I was hoping for a gold medal with our 1977 chardonnay and it's a wonderful feeling to come home with a grand prize, especially since it's the first one," said Bill Preston, owner of the winery.

Corti, who led the discussion about the grand prize winner said many wineries try for a lifetime to produce such a wine but Preston had done it in three years.

Rob Griffin made the wine for Preston. The grapes were harvested from the vineyard at the winery.

"The grand prize was well earned," said Dr. Walter F. Eggemberger of Switzerland, one of seven judges. "It had an outstanding bouquet and was well-balanced. This award should give Washington wines another push upwards," he said.

Earl Singer, editor of a wine magazine and another judge, said "Grand prizes are only given to wines of exceptional character. This

was such a wine. In general the wines in the Northwest show tremendous promise of being outstanding in the years to come."

There were six gold medals awards, 13 silvers and 15 bronze.

Categories in which gold, silver and bronze awards were made include:

Sauvignon Blanc — 1978 Chateau Ste. Michelle gold; 1978 Sokol Blosser Winery gold; 1978 The Eyrie Vineyards silver.

Open white dry — 1978 Saltice Blanc, Amity Vineyards, silver; Pinot Noir Blanc, Reuter's Hill Vineyard silver; 1978 semillon, Adelsheim Vineyards bronze; 1978 Muller-Thurgau, Sokol Blosser bronze.

Open white medium — 1978 Chenin blanc, Preston Wine Cellars silver; 1977 Muscat of Alexandria, Tualatin Vineyard silver; blanc des blancs, non vintage, Knudsen-Erath, bronze.

Gewurztraminer — 1977 Associated Vintners silver; 1978 Ste. Chappelle bronze.

Late or special harvest riesling — 1977 Johannisberg Riesling, Chateau Ste. Michelle gold; white riesling, Hinzlerling Vineyards silver; 1977 white riesling, Tualatin Vineyard bronze.

Chardonnay — 1977 Preston Wine Cellars gold and grand prize; 1977 Associated Vintners silver; 1977 Elk Cove bronze; 1977 Knudsen Erath bronze.

Riesling dry — 1978 Riesling, Elk Cove Vineyards gold; 1978 White Riesling, Oak Knoll Winery silver; 1978 white riesling, Ponzi Vineyards silver; 1977 Johannisberg Riesling bronze; 1978 White Riesling, Hinzlerling Vineyards, Bronze; 1978 Johannisberg Riesling, Preston Wine Cellars bronze; Riesling, non vintage, Reuter's Hill bronze; 1978 Johannisberg Riesling, Ste. Chappelle bronze.

Merlot — Ste. Chappel Vineyards gold; 1977 Elk Cove Vineyards silver; 1977 Eyrie Vineyard bronze.

Cabernet sauvignon — 1976 Eyrie Vineyards silver.

Open Rose — 1978 Nouveau pinot noir, Amity Vineyards bronze; 1978 Petite Sirah Tualatin bronze.