

Taste of Richmond sells out at Richmond Auditorium

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All photos by Kathy Chouteau

By Kathy Chouteau

Approximately 250 people came out to savor the flavor at the 6th annual Taste of Richmond event last Saturday at the Richmond Memorial Auditorium.

On the annual event's first showing at the auditorium, it sold out and added new elements alongside food & beverage vendors, such as live entertainment and artists selling their creations. In all, there were 20 food and beverage vendors at Taste of Richmond, and ten artisan vendors stationed in the entranceway, according to Executive Director of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce Vernon Whitmore.

"We did have to turn people away" due to being sold out, noted Whitmore, and as of the morning of the event, the Chamber and its partners had 250 tickets sold. "So with the people that bought tickets, plus the vendors here, we wanted to ensure that everyone had food, so...we had to cut it off."

Whitmore underscored that the Civic Center is a perfect venue for the Taste of Richmond since it's a central location and no matter where you live in Richmond, it's accessible. He said that they decided to schedule the event later in the day to avoid conflict with the No

Kings rally earlier that day, and due to serving alcohol. Organizers also made the event a 13 and up activity.



He said the turnout was “beyond their expectations” and that “This is the first year the Chamber has been involved, and so we hope to make this one of our signature events.”

The food and beverage vendors offered a tasty sampling of the best of Richmond under one roof. Rubicon Bakers tantalized the tastebuds with a variety of cakes with icing that were popular among the event’s attendees. Other attendees remarked on the flavorful ceviche from Mariscos Los Reyes and sausage links from Pickles N’ Smoke. Tom Lyons and his wife Michelle Guest could be seen working diligently at The Factory Bar’s popular station, while East Brother Beer Co.’s Rob Lightner and Armistice Brewing Co. also saw a nice swell of visitors.

Among the standout performers during the event were Son de La Tierra Mexican folk group from the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, which received enthusiastic applause from

the crowd, as well as Richmond's own Wanda Gonzalez, who wowed attendees with her exquisite voice. And solo violinist Nakele Rechenauer—who doubles down as president of the Richmond Rotary Club—cooled the room in the best of ways with her enchanting classical music.

The artisan vendors didn't disappoint, with the ever-popular Multicultural Bookstore on hand with bookseller Tamara Shiloh, the Whitmore Brothers—Andrew & Chris—with Richmond threads from 1905apparel, Samantha Marie of Paper Cut Pottery and more.



Linda Whitmore teamed up with a partner to emcee the event, introducing performers and speakers, thanking sponsors and raffling off a variety of donated prizes. Seen mingling in the room were Richmond mayoral candidate Amad Anderson, Bay Area Girls Club's Tiffany Harris, City Councilmember Cesar Zepeda, City Council candidate Jamin Purcell, the Contra Costa Youth Service Bureau's Glenda Roberts, Tony Tamayo from the Richmond mayor's office and so many more familiar faces.

Amid the tasty food, a pervasive sense of community permeated the auditorium. Mayor of Richmond Eduardo Martinez said, "It's a fantastic event," adding, "Taste of Richmond is about the food, but it's also about the people." He said that, so far that day, he hadn't filled up with food. "I've filled up with conversation."

Taste of Richmond was hosted by the Chamber and presented by the City of Richmond's Economic Development Commission, in partnership with Richmond Main Street Initiative

(RSMI) and Richmond's Farmer's Markets.



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