

# Riesling from Colo. honored as best in world

Something big happened in the wine world recently that legitimized Colorado's wine industry.

The 2003 Riesling from Carlson Vineyards of Palisade, Colo., was named the finest Riesling in the world.

That's right — I said "world."

The 29th Annual International Eastern Wine Competition (IEWC) held in May recently announced the results.

The IEWC is one of the oldest and most prestigious wine competitions in the United States.

If there was any doubt before, there should be none now: It's a huge mistake to be dismissive of Colorado wines.

"This is a very big deal, and is another feather in the cap for Colorado wines," said Doug



WINE  
GIL  
WHITELEY

Caskey, executive director of the Colorado Wine Industry Development Board.

Parker Carlson started making hard apple cider in his basement while he was working in the ceramics division of Coors and that's where his interest in making wine began. It developed into a business at the urging of his wife Mary.

"If not for her, this wouldn't have happened," he said.

Carlson was stationed in Germany in the late 1960s and developed a love for Riesling. The Carlsons first planted Riesling grape vines in Colorado's Grand Valley back in 1981, and the resulting product was one of the three original Colorado wines that were released commercially in 1988. The other two were peach and cherry wine. Their top seller, Carlson's Prairie Dog Bush, is the top-selling blush wine in Colorado.

The IEWC is held at the Corning Museum of Glass in Corning, N.Y., each year. The 2004 event

draw 156 Rieslings from Australia, Canada, France, Germany, New Zealand, Romania, South Africa and the U.S. which was represented by 17 states including California.

The World Riesling Championship had four best-of-class winners, one of which is Chateau Saint-Michel's "Erica" Dr. Loosen Riesling 2003, one of the best wines in the world.

Carlson 2003

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## WINE: Colorado award-winning Riesling competed with 156 entries from eight countries

### CARLSON WINE PICKS

Wine ratings and values are based on a 100-point scale. For example, an excellent tasting, less expensive wine would receive a higher value rating.

#### Carlson Vineyards, 2003 Riesling, \$11.50:

Semi-sweet but loaded with fruit, this is perfect with a pork roast, turkey, chicken or most fish. Rating 93  
Value 95

**Carlson Vineyards, Cherry Wine, \$11:** This is tart and sweet and attacks the mouth much like a cranberry juice cocktail. It is incredibly refreshing and would be perfect on a shaded porch swing on a summer afternoon. Try this with some semi-sweet chocolate grounds on the rim like salt on the rim of a margarita glass.

Rating 89  
Value 88

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Riesling — the champion — was selected from the four best-of-class gold medalists, all costing significantly more than the modest \$11.50 Carlson entry.

The World Riesling Cup was awarded to Parker and Mary Carlson on June 18, marking a new era in Colorado wines.

An award of this importance is comparable to the respect California wines enjoyed after the 1976 Paris tasting, in which the California wines finished first, in both red and white wines.

**GIL WHITELEY**, a certified sommelier, reviews wines for the Business Journal. He also is a talk show host on Denver's 710KNUS from 5 to 9 p.m. Saturdays. Reach him via e-mail at Gilfest@attti.com.



Parker and Mary Carlson, who own vineyards in Palisade, Colo., pose with the World Riesling Cup from the International Eastern Wine Competition.

### 2004 WORLD RIESLING CHAMPIONSHIP

#### Best-of-class winners

#### Best Semi-Sweet Riesling, World Riesling

**Champion** — Carlson Vineyards Inc., 2003 Riesling, 530 cases, \$11.50

#### Best Dry Riesling

— Heron Hill Vineyards, 2002 Riesling Reserve, Finger Lakes, N.Y., 281 cases, \$21.49

#### Best Semi-Dry Riesling

— Chateau Ste. Michelle, 2003 Erica Dr. Loosen Riesling, Columbia Valley, Wash., 18,000 cases, \$20

#### Best Sweet Riesling

— Jackson-Triggs Vintners, (BC), 2003 Proprietors' Reserve, Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, 1,200 cases, \$52.99