



The Sierra Madre Chamber of Commerce Wistaria Festival 2009

The Sierra Madre Chamber of Commerce

Invites you to the

Wistaria Festival Media Event*

Wednesday, March 4th, 2009

9am to 11am

An opportunity to view and photograph the "World's Largest Blossoming Plant"

Exclusive Press Access, no crowds

Ideal foothill village location for live remote broadcast

Learn the history of the vine from Sierra Madre expert and historian Phyllis Chapman

Meet the owner of one of the properties on which the 115-year old vine sits

Live entertainment by one of the Festival performing artists

Continental Breakfast

Contact *Tiffany Bailey* at 626.355.5111 or *info@SierraMadreChamber.com* or
Bill Coburn at 626.355.4972 or *BillCoburn@SierraMadreChamber.com*
for the address and directions to the event.

*Prelude to March 15th Wistaria Festival featuring 150+ artisans and food vendors

Two dozen musical acts performing at six outdoor venues



The Sierra Madre Chamber of Commerce Wistaria Festival 2009

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The Sierra Madre Chamber of Commerce Wistaria Festival 2009

Who:

Sierra Madre Chamber of Commerce

What:

One-day annual Festival celebrating the Guinness Book certified "World's Largest Blossoming Plant." Featuring tours of the vine, arts and craft fair in the Village, live musical entertainment, a kids' zone, dining al fresco at local restaurants as well as food vendors in the park. KOLA 99FM will be doing a remote broadcast from the downtown area.

When:

Sunday, March 15, 2009

Festival hours: 9am to 5pm

Vine Tours: 9am to 4pm

Where:

The festival takes place in the Sierra Madre downtown area, a charming village atmosphere that looks much the same today as it did in the early 20th century. The vine is on the property of two private residences. Note: *Grounds are on private property; access incompatible for people with limited mobility. Wheelchairs, strollers not allowed.*

Why:

The "Lavender Lady" is 115 years old!

How:

Take the 210 freeway to Baldwin Ave., head north towards the mountains. The festival is in downtown Sierra Madre, free of charge. The vine is up in the hills, we recommend you take the shuttle. Tickets are \$9.00 pre-sale, \$10 the day of the event. Tickets can be purchased online at www.WistariaFestival.com, by phone at (626) 355-5111, or at the Farmer's Market on Mariposa in Sierra Madre each Wednesday between 3 and 7pm at the Chamber booth. The Gateway Coach shuttle will be available free of charge this day only to transport attendees roundtrip from the Sierra Madre Villa Station of the Gold Line to downtown Sierra Madre, from 10am to 6pm. Reduced rate reservations for Wistaria attendees are available at the official Host Hotel of the Wistaria Festival, the DoubleTree Hotel in Monrovia (626) 357-1900 Group Name: Wistaria Festival



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Sierra Madre Celebrates Annual Wistaria Festival

Thousands come to visit the annual festival celebrating this breathtaking vine!

The Guinness Book of World Records has named the Vine as the World's largest flowering plant. It is estimated that at the height of bloom it has 1.5 million blossoms with 40 blossoms per square foot, a weight of 250 tons and has branches that extend 500 feet. In 1918, 12,000 people attended the first public Wistaria Festival. In the 1930s, a 6-week Wistaria event took place, with more than 100,000 people making the trip to see the vine. Extra "Red Cars" were put on the Pacific Electric route to Sierra Madre to handle the crowds. In recent years, the crowd has been estimated at 10,000 people, and in 2007, one young resident chose it as the very special location at which he and his girlfriend became engaged to be married.

Extraordinary Art, Fine Crafts and Vendors

Each year, crowds estimated at up to 10,000 people visit Sierra Madre to enjoy the work of nearly 150 juried artisans and craftsmen, dynamite music, fabulous food and drink, and a variety of fun for the whole family. Sierra Madre's Wistaria Festival has a well-earned reputation as a world-class event. Stroll through Kersting Court, up Baldwin Ave. and across Sierra Madre Blvd, as the charming village downtown area becomes an Art Faire where festival-goers will find hundreds of hand crafted items by the very best artists and craft makers while browsing among 150 booths featuring original work in clothing, jewelry, paintings, wood objects, fiber arts, garden art and other gift items.

Dynamite Live Music

Two dozen musical acts at six outdoor venues will play jazz, blues, bluegrass, classical, Celtic and rock - a wide ranging musical mix on stage and street. Mario Lalli of Café 322 has pulled together an entertainment lineup for the downtown area that ranges from solo acoustic guitar and vocals, to a four piece classic rock band augmented by a full horn section. At the vine, the more tranquil musical selections will include classical guitar, cello and guitar, and the harp.

Fabulous Food and Drink

Sierra Madre is blessed with a wonderful selection of restaurants featuring outdoor dining, including a variety of international flavors, Mexican, Italian, Thai, and California Continental cuisines, complemented by several types of American cuisine and even a Sushi spot. During the festival, you'll find several food vendors in the park, including delicious BBQ, corn on the cob, empanadas, kettle corn and more. There's a local pub, restaurants with full cocktail service, beer and wine establishments, and delicious margaritas to satisfy your mood.

Local Non-Profits

The Rotary Club will be serving tri-tip, the Garden Club will sell plants, the four years in a row award-winning Rose Float Assn. will be on hand, the world famous Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team will have a display, and other local organizations will be on hand, to showcase all that the volunteers of these organizations do. A special fundraiser will take place for the world famous Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team, as the DoubleTree Hotel, Monrovia, the official host hotel of the Wistaria Festival, will have a booth selling their iconic "chocolate chip cookies" with proceeds being donated to the Search and Rescue Team.

Sierra Madre's 115 Year-Old Wistaria Vine

By Phyllis Chapman



Photo Copyright 2007 Bill Coburn

In 1894, William and Alice Brugman purchased a home on Piedmont, as it was called then, but would later have the address of 201 W. Carter Ave. The house had been built one year before by builder Amos Trussell for his daughter Winona and son-in-law Edward B. Jones when they married. It was the first wedding celebrated in early Sierra Madre. The Trussells and the Jones soon had a change of plans, sold to the Brugmans and moved away.

To enhance her new home, Alice Brugman, with her neighbor Mrs. W. B. Crisp, drove by horse and buggy to the old R. H. Wilson Pioneer Nursery in Monrovia and for \$.75 purchased a gallon can of wistaria. It was the Chinese Wistaria variety (*Wisteria sinensis*). She planted it in a corner of her front porch remarking to her neighbor: "They say Wistaria

grows fast." And grow it did.

Mr. Brugman, a mining engineer, was in Mexico when the vine was planted. He died in 1899 and Mrs. Brugman sold the home in 1906. The property changed hands until it was purchased in 1913 by Henry T. and Estelle Fennel. Mr. Fennel, who was a bit of a horticulturist, loved the vine, and gave it devoted care, even building support trellises.

Although the Wistaria is a vigorous grower, the added support of the trellises may have contributed to this vine's phenomenal growth. The arbors prevented the end tendrils from hanging down and causing the tender terminal buds to die from the added weight. Wistaria requires good drainage, certainly provided by this hilly, terraced location. There may also be an underground spring providing water to the tap root.

The vine eventually destroyed the original home, growing into the walls and fireplace and causing the roof to collapse. Mr. Fennel built a new home 200 feet to the north (the present upper home) and trained the vine to grow up to, but not covering the new residence. A portion of the foundation of that original home was saved to continue to provide support for the vine as its branches extended such a distance.

When the vine was in bloom, the Fennels would invite friends to come and enjoy the blossoming plant. Others asked to come and visitors also came from Pasadena's main hotels: The Green, The Huntington, and The Raymond. In 1918, during World War I, the Fennels opened the vine to the Sierra Madre Chapter of the American Red Cross, which sponsored a very successful fundraiser to help the war effort. 12,000 people attended the event. This was the beginning of the many Wistaria festivals and the frenzy of activities that took place year after year. With this huge annual festival, a Sierra Madre main event, Sierra Madre became known as the Wistaria City.

Many local organizations, including the Board of Trade (later named the Chamber of Commerce), the Woman's Club, the Masons and Eastern Star, the Sierra Madre Volunteer Fire Dept., etc. were involved. Many homemade items, fancy work, ceramics, artwork, gift books, and Wistaria fragrancd perfume, hand lotion and bath salts were sold at booths under the vine. Luncheons and teas were served, often with young Japanese women wearing their kimonos.

The hard work and money earned at the vine by members of the Woman's Club paid off the mortgage of their first clubhouse. One year the Fire Dept. parked 30,000 cars down on the parking lot that existed in Floral Canyon. (This was later developed and is now Sierra Meadow Dr.). Easter sunrise services were among vine activities. People came from all over the world and extra street cars were added to handle the crowds. Among the famous were Fritz Kreisler, Janet Leigh, Mary Pickford, and Norman Rockwell. These two helped select the festival's Wistaria Queen. The Packard Automobile Co. used the vine as a backdrop to advertise its automobile.

On December 5, 1936, Carrie Ida Lawless purchases the vine property from Mrs. Fennel, who was now a widow, for \$17,000.00. December 5th was Mrs. Lawless' birthday, and according to one account, she was making a present to herself of the world's largest bouquet. Also a widow, her husband William J (Bill) Lawless was mayor of Sierra Madre during 1928-29. She, herself, was a successful businesswoman having founded the Weaver Jackson Beauty Co. in Los Angeles and was active in the community, serving as president of the Woman's Club and the Garden Club.

Mrs. Lawless spent a small fortune (around \$100,000) enhancing the grounds of her new property and caring for the vine. When the festivals were held they often lasted for the weeks the vine was in bloom, not just for one day. Mrs. Lawless, a patron of the arts, also sponsored vine activities all year long. She hosted art exhibits, musicales, and poetry readings. Nearby residents objected to the constant activity and took their complaints to the City Council. Nothing was done as Mrs. Lawless presented the argument that the vine existed before these neighbors purchased their properties.

In recognition for her contributions to the community, the Garden Club planted another Wistaria in the terraced garden on the west side of what is today the Solt's garden. It blooms a bit later than the original vine and the plaque commemorating the occasion is gone.

When Mrs. Lawless died in 1942, she provided for the vine by leaving a legacy to her nephew and heir, Bruce McGill, to continue care of the property with a committee headed by the Garden Club President. In 1944, the property was purchased by Richard and Marian Thayer. Marian is the daughter of M. Penn Phillips, a well-known developer of desert property. In 1944 the vine was overgrown and in poor condition. Richard Thayer planned to chop it up and get rid of it. A protest was raised and an association was formed to protect the vine, with money provided to pay property taxes and provide year-round care.

In 1961, after Richard Thayer died, the lot was split. Marian married builder Ronald Cook who developed the west side of the property with new homes (the Floral Canyon area, now Sierra Meadow St.) and built the present Solt home for he and Marian in 1962. The upper home was sold to Joseph and Marie Feeney who raised eight children there. In 1972, Ron and Marian moved to Dana Point and sold the lower home to Bob and Nell Solt. In the late 1990s, Joe Feeney died and Maria sold the property. It was purchased in 2003 by the present owners, Dan and Dana Dorrance.

By the 1970's Vine Festival activity had about ended. It started up again in the late 70's when sponsored for one day each year by the Chamber of Commerce. The Sierra Madre Beautification Committee was the yearly sponsor in the 1980's. Approximately 500-600 people attended the festival each year. In the spring of 1989, Huell Howser came to film the vine for his program Videolog, which aired on KCET. The next year, approximately 6,000 people came to view the vine. The festival organizers were unprepared for such a turnout; lines stretched for two blocks. Howser returned in 1992 to film again for his "California Gold" program. Sierra Madre and the Chamber of Commerce quickly organized and combined the annual Vine viewing with a downtown street fair. A shuttle bus is provided and people procure tickets to see the vine at a pre-scheduled time.

The Guinness Book of World Records has named the Vine as the World's largest flowering plant. It is estimated that at the height of bloom it has 1.5 million blossoms with 40 blossoms per square foot, weight of 250 tons and has branches that extend 500 feet. Wistaria is a member of the pea family though its seeds resemble a flat bean. Seed pods burst open in the summer. The plant is deciduous, losing its leaves in the winter. The Wistaria seeds were brought from China by Marco Polo in the 13th century. Plants cultivated in China can live for 250 years.

Today, the vine covers approximately one acre. Over the years, it has shown distress and seemed to be dying. Experts have been brought in from Cal Tech, Occidental College, and Cal Poly Pomona. Correct pruning, treatments with hormones, and vitamin B have helped the vine to recover and to flourish. To help maintain the Vine's health, records of vine growth and care are now kept on a computer log. The Vine seems to produce its greatest flowering after a cold winter followed by a sudden hot spell.

What is the correct spelling for wisteria? Is it wisteria or wistaria? In the Sunset Western Garden Book it is spelled wisteria. Sierra Madre has always spelled it wistaria. According to experts at the Log Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden, senior biologist Jim Bauml and Librarian Joan De Fato, the plant was named to honor Caspar Wistar (1761-1818), an American physician and teacher, who taught at the University of Pennsylvania. Among his accomplishments, he wrote the first text-book on anatomy. When the name of the genus Wisteria was put into the books, it was incorrectly spelled, says De Fato. So, one could say that all along, Sierra Madre has correctly spelled Wistaria.



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2009 Wistaria Festival Entertainment Lineup

Vine Stage

Ron Longo, Harp
Michael Zubia, Classical Guitar
Ron Longo, Harp
Sean McCue and Michele Bauchesnes, Cello and Guitar

Memorial Park Stage – Sponsored by Athens Services

Vin Fiz Flyer, Bluegrass
Too Many Guitars, Classic Rock
Horses on Astro turf, Country Rock
Snotty Scotty and the Hankies, Garage Rock
The Sheds, Ska and Alternative/Rock
The Aluminum Marshmallow with the Age of Aquarius Horns, 60s and 70s Dance/Rock

Charcuterie - Sierra Madre Arts Commission Jazz Stage

DC3
Thelonious Dub
Kay Martin

Jailhouse Inn Stage

Thee Superstitions, Blues/Psychobilly/Roots Rock
Max Buda, Jaz/Zydeco/Blues/Roots Rock
Mercy Powell Jazz Quartet
Tim Tutweiler, Acoustic Rock

Kersting Court Stage – Sponsored by Sharp Seating Company

Crown City Blues Band, Blues
Reno Jones, Swing/Blues

Colbert Salon Stage

Sean McCue and Michelle Bauchesnes, Cello and Guitar

Lunch Salon Stage

Banna Beag Mall, Celtic/Eclectic

Strolling

Vin Fiz Flyers, Bluegrass

Additional acts expected at some stages. All stages/acts subject to change without notice.

Music/Entertainment Chair: Mario Lalli of Café 322

Wistaria Festival Sponsors



Stage Sponsors

Host Hotel



Bronze Sponsors



Gail Francone,
Coldwell Banker
Residential Brokerage,
Arcadia





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Special Post Mark Cancellation Available at Sierra Madre Wistaria Festival



The Sierra Madre Chamber of Commerce and the U.S. Postal Service announce a special post mark cancellation to celebrate the Sierra Madre Wistaria Festival.

This special postmark will be available at the Sierra Madre Wistaria Festival, Sunday March 15, 2009 at the Wistaria Festival Postal Station located at Kersting Court in Sierra at Sierra Madre Boulevard and Baldwin Avenue. This special Wistaria Festival Station will be open 11 A.M. to 3 P.M.

Bring postcards or letters and mail them from this special event post office and your friends will be surprised when they receive mail with this extraordinary postmark.

This postal cancellation has been announced and printed in the U. S. Postal Bulletin which is distributed world wide. To accommodate collectors from out of the area the Sierra Madre Post Office will cancel postcards and letters upon request with the Wistaria Cancellation for 30 days after the event. To postmark a letter after the event go to Sierra Madre Post Office and request the wistaria postmark on your mail.

For more information contact:

The Sierra Madre Chamber of Commerce (626) 355-5111

E-mail Info@SierraMadreChamber.com

Photos From Past Wistaria Festivals

High resolution images are available in .jpg, .tif, .bmp and .pdf formats upon request



2009

Photos by Elizabeth Booth



Photos by Bill Coburn



WISTARIA FESTIVAL

Photos by Bill Coburn



Local Dining

Barney's Only Place in Town

110 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Phone: (626) 355-3502

Beantown Coffee Bar

45 N. Baldwin Ave.,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Phone: (626) 355-1596 Fax (626) 355-3034

Cafe 322

322 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Phone (626) 836-5414

Casa Del Rey

31 N. Baldwin Ave.,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Phone: (626) 355-6060

Charcuterie

120 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
(626) 355-3908

Cold Stone Creamery

7 Kersting Court,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Phone: (626) 355-7000

Corfu

48 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Phone: (626) 355-5993

Domino's Pizza

17 Kersting Court,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Phone: (626) 355-0033

Four Seasons Tea Room, The

75 N. Baldwin Ave.,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
(626) 355-0045

Kentucky Fried Chicken

345 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Phone: (626) 355-4388

Lucky Baldwin's Delirium Cafe

21 Kersting Court,
Sierra Madre CA
Phone: (626) 355-1140 • Fax: (626) 836-6688

Mary's Market and Cafe

561 Woodland Drive,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Phone: (626) 355-4534

Mountain View Restaurant

24A Sierra Madre Blvd.,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Phone: (626) 355-1324

Restaurant Lozano

44 N. Baldwin Ave.,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Phone: (626) 355-5945

Starbucks Coffee Company

1 Kersting Court,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Phone: (626) 355-8222

Sierra Juice Company

1 Kersting Court,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Phone: (626) 836-1293

Sierra Madre Pizza Company

181 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.,
Sierra Madre, CA
(626) 355-6058

Thai in Sierra Madre

85 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Phone: (626) 355-1616

Ugo's Deli Bakery Cafe

74 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
(626) 836-5700

Village Pizzeria

41 N. Baldwin Ave.,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Phone: (626) 355-8817

Wildflour Baking Company

328 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.,
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Phone: (626) 355-9000

A Partial List of Vendors

Company Name	Website
Exotic Accessories	
blissbaby	www.blissbabe.etsy.com
Artique Treasures	
Pretty Things Jewelry	
Copper River Creations	
Martha's Special T's	
Mystic Bottle Studio	www.gourmetpotter.com
D. Lizzie	
Keeper of the Rainbow	www.keeperoftherainbow.net
Karen Kleinhuizen	
Tiffany's House Inc	
Earth Dance Music	www.earthdancemusic.com
The Soapdishes	www.thesoapdishes.com
Ancient Echoes	
Frank's Bonsai	
Creative Memories	www.mycmsite.com/lauraclauson
Village Clayworks	www.villageclayworks.com
O' Dorsay, Inc	
Spectra Vision Glassworks	www.spectravisionglassworks.com
Just for Fun	
Voila Vintage Francofolie	www.francofolie.com
Ron's Wood	
Ann Cruz	www.annmadecandles.com
Sassy Stones	www.sassystones.net
Center for Well Being	
Precious Gem	www.e-preciousgem.com
Searcy Designs, LLC	www.searcydesigns.com
Johnny Ceramics	
Robertson Roasted Almonds	
Indigo Lights	www.indigolights.com
Imagination Depot	
Leonora Moss	
FloraDora	
Two Chicks in the Park	
Double Spot	
Harry Chamberlain Photography	www.hcphoto.net
The Dragon Flame Shop	www.thedragonflameshop.com
Craft Just 4 U	
What's Popp'n Kettle Corn	
Sun Lover's Place	
The Joan & Lucy Show	
Kardon Trading Co.	
T & C Pottery	
Nancy's Reflections	

Company Name	Website
Designs By Brenda	
Three D	www.johnaconroy.com
Nostalgia Graphics	www.Stancline.com
Weathered Woods	
Chrevan	www.chrevan.com
Fairy Tale Doll Compnay	www.fairytaledollcompany.com
Thai Dye	www.thaidye.com
Ani Designs	
North Street Designs	www.ossygirl46.etsy.com
Antique Label Company	www.antiquelabelcompany.com
Carol Jean Green Watercolors	
Billy's a Bad Kitty	www.Billysabadkitty.com
The Sierra Madre Candy Co.	www.sierramadrecandy.com
Ferne Saltzman Photography	www.photopaintingsbyferne.com
Slavic Gifts	
Smooth Music.Com	www.smoothmusic.com
Ashprey's	
Susy Giese Creations	
Tabrizi Designs	
Squires Ceramic Studio	
Porcelain Designs	
Yu-Neek Designs	
Stapleton-McErlane Design	
Keepers Ceiling Fan Pulls	www.keepersfanpulls.net
Shakeel's Concepts	
Kay Taylor Handcrafted Jewelry	
Spinning Wheel Ceramics	
Calmark Marketing	
Vintage Chimes	
Christopher Miller Creations	www.pale-moon.com
Annie's Garden	www.anniesgardenceramics.com
Jay Simmons	www.tikatequila.com
Blue Moon Crafted Creations	
Sassafrass Pottery	www.sassafrasspottery.com
Ayers Handwoven	www.ayershandwoven.com
Watercolors by Connie Towns	www.connietownsart.com
Bruce Burr Photography	
Polestar Magnetic Jewelry	
Pretty Fancy	www.prettyfancy.com
The Lath Straw	
Furniture Plus	
Craft	
Frances Kohler	
Ira Meyer Photography	www.irameyer.com
Metal & Glass	www.mcbarnard.com

Company Name	Website
The OM	
Hasri Collection	www.hasricoll.com
Janet Jacobs Pottery	www.janetjacobspottery.com
Laughing Spirit Gourds	
Trudy James Unique Handcrafted Jewelry	www.trudyjames.com
Rainbow Tie Dyes	www.rainbowtiedyes.net
Gitas Crafts & Designs	
Fiamma Soy Candles	www.fiammacandles.com
Steven Johnstone Photography	www.sjohnstonephoto.com
Silver Spoon Jewelry	www.silverspoonjewelry.com
Shady Grove Mosaics	www.shadygrovemosaics.com
AnKara Designs	www.ankaradesigns.com
Flores Suncatchers, Etc	
Reva Mattson	www.revamattson.com
Eclectics824	www.eclectics824.com
True Colors	
Imaginations Unlimited	
Caruso & Foschi Designs	
Eye's Designs	
Laurie Jo Designs	www.lauriejodesigns.com

2009
SIERRA MADRE

WISTARIA FESTIVAL

