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Rock out with music and wine

Sandra Silfven: Thursday, October 11, 2007

Wine is groovy.

Rock 'n Roll Wine LLC, based in Las Vegas, found a new niche a few years back with "amplified" wine tastings -- parties at venues such as nightclubs, casinos, bars and galleries where they offer patrons a catchy combination of fine wine and live or recorded music.

Now, founder Chris Hammond's brother, David, who lives in Canton Township, is bringing this concept to Metro Detroit.

"The point," says David Hammond, is to "get out of the wine-stuffiness mold. We are like a little rave; we show up with our amplifiers and equipment."

Hammond arranges for the wines, which he selects through the venue and local distributors.

You can experience this new tasting concept at Melange Bistro & Wine Bar in Ann Arbor on Oct. 25, when Hammond hosts a party with Nadir, a hot funk-rock-blues artist in Metro Detroit and -- oh, yes -- eight hand-picked wines.

This event will be a mini-version of their recent blowout on the outdoor stage at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, which pulled in 3,200 guests to sip and sway with Sugar Ray and more than 150 wines.

The Hammonds grew up with wine and winemaking via their dad, NBC sportscaster Tom Hammond, who is a passionate devotee of the grape. So it's no surprise that Rock 'n Roll Wine has a license to make and sell wine, too. Their label is called Amplified Wine, and next spring, they'll release a five-grape white blend called Reggae Rhapsody.

After Melange, you can catch their beat on Dec. 6 at Vinology in Ann Arbor.

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