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VALLEY NEWS

Summer in Temecula Valley gets started with Balloon & Wine festival

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Rob Davis photo

Eager Temecula Valley Balloon & Wine Festival goers gather around the hot air balloons for the evening balloon glow, Saturday, June 1.

More than 23,000 people made the trip out to Lake Skinner Recreation Area in Winchester to kick off summer at the Temecula Valley Balloon & Wine Festival, Friday, May 31, through Sunday, June 2.

While wine lovers meandered through the trees surrounding the tasting area sampling wines from local and regional wineries, just across the way, beer lovers were enjoying craft brewery offerings from the likes of Inland Wharf Brewing Co., Craft Brewing Company and Wiens Brewing.

"It's been good for us," Kirk Mederos of Craft Brewing said on Sunday afternoon. "Especially for all of us, the local breweries that are here."

Mederos said that Ben Wiens invited some local brewers to participate again this year after missing out the last couple of years.

"But now we're back and I think it's going to be a good partnership," Mederos said. "I think it's going to be good for both of us – the breweries and the festival."

Akash Patel of Akash Winery said the new winery's second-year experience at the festival was a good one.

"Amazing," Patel said. "It is always a good event to be at. The exposure and the people you get to meet with and talk about wine while showcasing your brand is great."

While not sipping, attendees gathered around the wine stage to listen to local and regional musical acts perform in between deejay sets by Q1033 radio personality Mikie Dillenger.

When they weren't rocking out, festival attendees were enjoying festival food fare or shopping at one of the close-to 100 vendors at the festival.

On Friday night, Thousand Horses headlined the main stage entertainment before giving way to the all-new "Toast the Glow" experience featuring about a dozen hot air balloons lighting up and "dancing" to the music.

Saturday night, the festival went a little bit more rock with the Forty Nineteens, Dishwalla, Soul Asylum and 3 Doors Down performing on the big stage.

Sunday saw country music artists Coffey Anderson and Russell Dickerson on the main stage with Big & Rich closing out the festival with a raucous headlining performance.

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