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From Lockport to Hollywood

Spring Lake Winery will be among the stars today for the Emmy Awards

By Joe Olenick

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LOCKPORT — The Spring Lake label is making a name for itself in Tinseltown. Tamre Varallo, who owns Spring Lake Winery in Lockport with her husband, Nicholas, will be at tonight's Emmy ceremony.

The invitation was given to Varallo by Legacy Entertainment, a product placement agency that works with movies and TV shows.

Legacy has taken an interest in Spring Lake's products, thinking the wines with the trademark glazed leaf on the bottle would look great on camera, Varallo said. The agency felt it would be good for Varallo to meet producers and some of those in the industry. So they sent Varallo an invitation last month.

"They were impressed, and it's not just the wine itself," Varallo said. "They thought it was very photographable."

The 62nd Primetime Emmy Awards will take place at 8 p.m. today at the Nokia Theatre in Los Angeles. "Late Night's" Jimmy Fallon will host the show.

Varallo is in Los Angeles with her daughter, Cristina, 27. The two left Thursday for the City of Angels excited about today's award show. Saturday, the pair was invited to a red carpet opening party at an L.A. club where Spring Lake's Estate Riesling was featured.

After tonight's show, Varallo and her daughter are also invited to the Governor's Ball, a special dinner with all of the winners. Once again, Spring Lake wines will be offered.

Having Spring Lake's wines appear on television and in movies, as well as attending the Emmys, doesn't just promote Spring Lake, Varallo said.

"It's not just us, but Niagara County," she said. "We have good wine here and have won a lot of awards in California. We can be proud of our region."

Oscar Vizcarra of Vizcarra Vineyards serves as president of the Niagara Wine Trail. Each of the wineries work together to promote the area, he said. Having a local winery at the Emmys is huge, Vizcarra said.

“It’s unbelievable,” he said. “When she told me, I was surprised. We’re really glad for her and for the trail. It can only help us.”

Spring Lake wines have been sent to the set of the CBS comedy “Two and a Half Men,” which stars Charlie Sheen and 2009 Emmy winner Jon Cryer. The Spring Lake label also on the set of “Arthur,” a remake of a 1981 Dudley Moore comedy starring Jennifer Garner and Russell Brand.

The wines could also be seen in an untitled upcoming HBO drama series starring Eddie Redmayne and the Malibu Celebrity Golf Classic in July.

Varallo said the winery has received scripts to a few movies in the making. Legacy wants to know the Varallos’ opinion on where their wines would fit into the storyline.

“We’ll pick where our wines would be a good fit,” Varallo said. “We’re looking for places (in the script) to promote wine. So we look for people drinking or enjoying wine.”

The Varallo family certainly knows its wine. Nicholas has been making wine for years, Varallo said. The family bought 70 acres of land about 10 years ago and turned what was a gravel quarry into a lake. And after searching for years for the right grape to grow, the Varallos decided on Riesling.

Like the many wineries on the Niagara Wine Trail, Spring Lake hosts wine tastings, weddings and special events. And it tries to promote a family atmosphere, Varallo said.

“We try to be family-oriented here and promote family fun,” she said.

Varallo said while she is in Los Angeles, the winery will be busy. This weekend, Spring Lake played host to a 150-person wedding and its Vineyard Express wine train. The train event was today, with 275 people expected and a concert by Hot Daddy Rocks by the lake on the winery’s grounds.

In addition to promoting itself and fellow wineries, Varallo said Spring Lake likes to promote Lockport and the county.

“We want to promote it and have people come out this way,” she said.