

**SPECIALITY**

# Hello to Hollywood: Celebrate Vero Wine and Film Festival June 8-11

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The Vero Beach Wine + Film Festival highlights the best of Vero Beach – art, natural beauty, eco-awareness, toe-baring lifestyle, emerging chefs and coastal hospitality – and celebrating fine wines and remarkable films.

From June 8 to 11, festival-goers will sip fine wines and see remarkable films in venues throughout Vero: the Heritage Center, Quail Valley, Costa d'Este, WOW! Lounge, Grind+Grape, Vero Beach Theatre Guild, Riverside Theater, RT Waxlax, RT Stark, Blue Star Wine Bar and the Barrier Island Center.

Last year, the first Vero Beach Wine + Film Festival attracted more than 1,000 people from Indian River County and beyond.

“It’s now being hailed as the new ‘Summer Sundance film festival,’” says VBWFF founder and Executive Director Jerusha Stewart.

The festival features documentaries and compelling narratives submitted by filmmakers from around the globe.

This year’s theme is “A Life Worth Living,” inspired by the festival’s beneficiary, Suncoast Mental Health Center, a local nonprofit that provides counseling to children and their families in Indian River, St.

Lucie, Martin and Okeechobee counties., upon whose board Stewart sits.

## Hollywood bigwigs

Honorary chair for the event is Jeff Woolnough, whose directing repertoire includes award-winning television shows “Vikings” and “NCIS.”

Top Hollywood bigwigs on the jury include producer Molly Smith of multi-award winning “The Blindside” and “La La Land..”

She will speak at the “Fierce Females” luncheon, as will producer and top entertainment industry publicist Ngoc Nguyen and Barb Stegemann, star of the multi award-winning documentary, “Perfume War,” to be screened at the luncheon, and a second time during the festival.

Hollywood legend Burt Reynolds will accept in person the VBWFF’s “Life Worth Living Legend Award” at the Cinema Uncorked opening night event, presented by Celebrity Cruises, on Friday, June 9, at 6:30 p.m. at Riverside Theater.

Reynold’s most recent film “Dog Years,” a moving story about faded fame and growing old, is premiering here after making its Tribeca film festival opening.

### **Local talent**

Director Dominic Traverzo and Vincent Anton Obriskie, whose film “Reggie,” was shot entirely in Vero with an all-Vero cast will host a forum, “How to Make a Low Budget Film,” Saturday, June 10 at 3 p.m. at Riverside

### **Festival details**

Making the festival possible are more than 50 partners, some offering venues free of charge and others offering direct financing.

Culinary Chair Kitty Wagner, local chef of the popular Blue Star Restaurant, is creating delectable dishes to complement a myriad of wines.

Wine tastings are included in the price of basic passes. Food passes are extra.

Premiere and Cellar Cuvee passes provide entry to such events as the Vino Veritas Vintner dinner on Thursday, June 8, at Costa d’Este, featuring a four-course dinner and wine-tasting, presented by a panel of visiting vintners.

While the screenings take place at 10 Vero Beach venues, some within walking distance of each other, main screening venues are the Theatre Guild, Riverside Theatre and the Vero Beach Museum of Art.

Wine tastings take place under the WOW! Tent at Riverside Park.

To purchase passes, visit [www.VBWFF.com/passes](http://www.VBWFF.com/passes). Pick them up at the festival box office at Theatre Guild the week of the festival. Please allow enough time before your screening to pick up your tickets.