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Half marathon finds a home

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Half marathon finds a home

By ARIANE KUNZE

Of the News-Register

Marilyn Bader waited anxiously at the finish line of the Oregon Wine Country Half Marathon. She was there to cheer on her daughter-in-law, Heidi, who had spent several months training for the event.

Until just before the event, Heidi had been training with her husband, Matt. Their intent was to run the race together.

However, fate intervened. He was deployed to Iraq.

"I'm just really proud of Heidi, because she is running this half marathon by herself," Marilyn said.

This testimony was just one of many that motivated runners from near and far to participate in the inaugural edition of the event.

Carlton was flooded with runners, family and friends for Sunday's run, which kicked off at 7 a.m.

More than 1,600 runners from 46 states and four foreign countries registered for the race. The little town of Carlton felt the strain from the temporary population increase, but didn't let that hamper its mission of providing first-class services and accommodations.

Abbey Road Farm Bed & Breakfast thrived from being a part of the half marathon events. The farm was the transition point for the two-person relay, so got a chance to offer runners completing their leg a hearty country breakfast.

"It was nice for us because we received more publicity and got more exposure," said proprietor John Stewart. "The people we spoke with really enjoyed the event and we look forward to participation next year."

The inn at Abbey Road Farm was booked solid for the weekend, but that's true of most weekends this time of year, he said.

The Alexana Winery received a large crowd of runners Sunday and Monday for tasting. The winery also joined two-dozen others in pouring for the Wine and Music Festival that Carlton staged immediately after the race.

The wineries served a huge crowd of runners and guests. Runners each got a commemorative wineglass with a race logo on it as part of their entry package, and that entitled them to free tasting.

Live music was provided by The Boomer Band. Afterward, runners filtered downtown, where they used their cork lanyards to qualify for discounts at participating businesses.

Byron Dooley of Seven of Hearts Wine experienced a tidal wave of visitors Sunday and Monday. "We had a very strong weekend, and much more business on Sunday than usual," he said.

Dooley participated in the discount program, which provided the runners and one guest each with 10 to 15 percent markdowns on food, wine and goods.

"The discount program was successful," he said. "We had a lot of runners come in and use their cork lanyards."

Jim and Sue Lindley traveled from California to participate in the run, which was staged by Destination Races, veteran of many such events in California wine country.

"We love it here in the Willamette Valley," Jim said. "We would move here tomorrow if we could find work."

They were joined by many others in that sentiment. Runners raved about the rolling hills, the gorgeous landscape and the perfect weather.

For Diya Nijdowne of Washington D.C., it was the lure of exquisite pinot noir and a landscape to match that drew her. And she wasn't disappointed.

"It was beautiful, and a very different atmosphere than other half marathons I have participated in," Nijdowne said. "I would love to come back."



