

The background of the entire page is a photograph of two large glass bottles in the foreground. The bottle on the left is green and has 'CAVENDISH' and 'BOTTLES' etched on it. The bottle on the right is brown and has 'BOTTLES' etched on it. In the background, a coastal landscape with mountains and a body of water is visible under a blue sky.

Morro Bay's 45th Annual Bottle Show


by **Dave Maryo**

Cindy and I had a nice drive up the California coast Friday morning. The sun was shining and the ocean waves were rolling in on the beaches as we drove north along the coast.

The Morro Bay show is California culture at its best. While the east coast was in freezing temperatures with rain and snow, most people attending the Morro Bay show were in t-shirts walking around tables filled with bottles on the outdoor patio surrounded by palm trees.

The Morro Bay show is a little out of the way, but is located at a great spot on the California coast. There are many things to do and see while you are in the area. The Hearst Castle is only 25 miles north, there are a dozen state beaches within a short drive, and for those wine lovers the world famous Paso Robles viticultural area is only 10 miles inland.

But the bottles are the attraction for this event and most collectors would not be disappointed if they attend. Each year very rare and valuable bottles make their appearance at the show. The show may not be as large as Auburn or Baltimore, but the bottles, the collectors and the location make this a very special show. The show always has a fantastic selection of bottles in every price range for collectors. When you arrive at the entrance to the show you are immediately surrounded by the bottle displays. This year, there was a nice collection of colored hair bottles in front of the window to the patio that would make even the most excited buyers stop and look. After I was distracted by the displays, it was a tough decision whether to go out to the patio or go inside. The patio did not have as many tables, but I knew some dealers outside would have an

The image features two large, antique glass bottles in the foreground. The bottle on the left is made of clear amber glass and has the word "BITTERS" embossed vertically on its right side. The bottle on the right is made of dark green glass and also has "BITTERS" embossed vertically on its right side. Both bottles have simple, slightly tapered necks and are sealed with dark, possibly cork or rubber, stoppers. The background is a soft-focus landscape of rolling hills or mountains under a pale sky, suggesting an outdoor setting like a fair or show.

interesting selection of bottles at great prices.

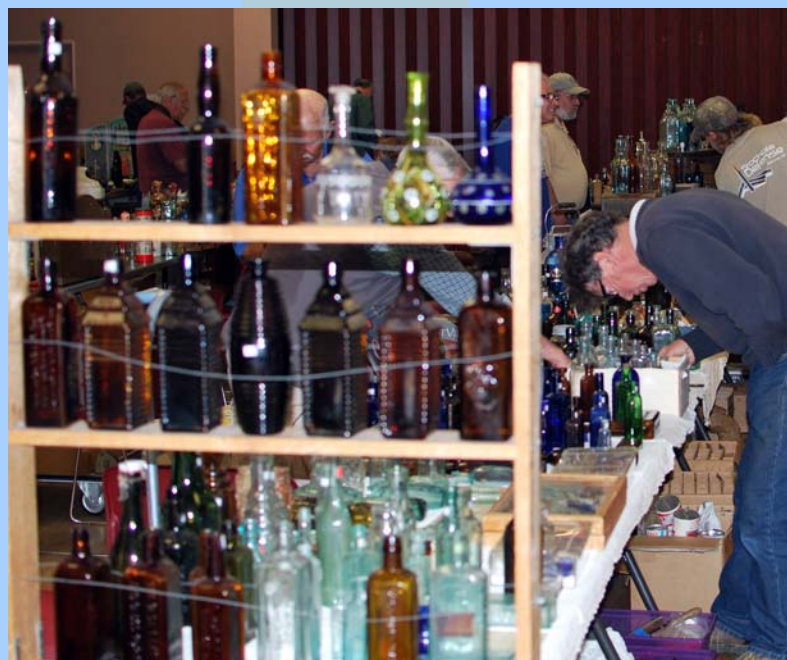
I chose to go inside where I would most likely find most of the rare and exciting bottles. Last year, there were two fantastic Plantation Bitters bottles in green and teal blue. This year, I was thrilled by four Catawba Wine Bitters bottles sitting side by side in a display case. The bottles were not for sale, but it was the first time that I can remember seeing more than one example of Catawba Bitters in a display. The bottles were four different colors and two were pontiled. This is why I try to never miss the Morro Bay show! While I was distracted by those great bottles, Cindy slipped away to walk around the show with Val Wippert.

Looking around the show to see where Cindy had gone, I spotted Robert Frank walking around the show talking to the dealers and collectors. Robert is a longtime collector with a true passion for all types of collectible bottles and has a museum filled with many interesting items just south of Morro Bay. I also saw many of the Los Angeles Bottle Club members attending the show. Several of the LAHBC members had sales tables while others were there just to buy and socialize. As I walked around inside I stopped to talk to many of my bottle friends. Ken Salter and his wife were set up with a great selection of early bottles many of them he dug in San Francisco many years ago. They also had a nice selection of San Francisco pot lids

I also stopped to talk with Mike Henness while I looked over his sales table. Mike always has some early bottles that would "fit just right" on my bottle



Beautiful window displays



Indoor vendors



Outside Vendors



shelves. This year Mike had a ten pin Luke Beard pontiled soda in dark cobalt that drew my attention. The bottle looked attic mint and even had the original metal bail to hold the cork stopper in place. I have never seen a better example at the shows on the east coast. Then I ran into Jerry Forbes and he asked me if I had seen the green Drake's Plantation Bitters at one of the tables at the back of the room. I did get a chance to see it later while Jeff Wichmann was holding it up in the light out on the patio. The sun was shining through the bottle showing the yellow green color with a bit of olive. The way Jeff was looking at the bottle I knew it would be going to a new home in Sacramento. Jeff had his sales table out on the patio filled with bottles, but it was difficult to look at them with the large crowd that always surrounds his table. I spent some time talking to Jeff about the FOHBC and his auctions before moving on to the other tables on the patio.



Paso Robles, which I enjoyed just the same.

I would have liked to stay around for the barbecue later that evening and the second day of the show, but my time was limited and I needed to be back at work on Saturday morning. I said my good-byes to all my bottle friends and headed east. Even though I did not have a chance to attend the barbecue I did indulge myself in wine tasting at a small vineyard nestled in a valley at the end of a winding country road on the west side of Paso Robles. Overall it was a great trip, a fantastic show and I came home with six bottles. They were new and full of wine, but I enjoyed them just the same.