

WINERY GUIDE

Haas' 'Jazz at Sunset' celebrates 10th anniversary

BY ANDY TAYLOR-FABE

Record-Eagle staff writer

Veteran jazz pianist Jeff Haas is used to lengthy sound checks, hours of equipment set-up and other tedious facets of life on the road.

Jazz at Sunset, a weekly concert at Chateau Chantal winery on Old Mission, is a chance for The Jeff Haas Trio to take things down a notch.

"That's the beauty of the gig ... It's very casual. There's a 'Come as you are' vibe," he said.

The free show, now in its 10th summer, is technically an indoor concert. But although the Trio sets up in the winery, the windows are open and allow anyone sitting outside on the patio or the grass to listen to the music and admire the view of West Grand Traverse Bay.

The Trio, which features Haas on piano, Jack Dryden at the upright bass and John Alfieri at the drums, does

not have a fixed set each week. Playing anything from jazz standards by Miles Davis and Duke Ellington to original pieces by Haas to on-the-spot improvisations, the Trio tries to keep its audience on its toes and make them feel "like they are part of (the show)," Haas said.

"You could come each week and hear something different," said Liz Berger, general manager of Chateau Chantal.

Berger and Haas came up with the idea for a weekly summer concert when the winery opened in 1993. Jazz at Sunset began the following summer.

"We wanted to see how people responded," said Haas. Within a couple of weeks, they were "overwhelmed" at the turn-out, which ranged between 150 and 250 people, he said.

"It's a really mixed crowd. There are retired couples, families and musicians that come every week," said

Berger.

Although there are many regulars, there are also a great number of people who stop in once in a while.

"The show has gained life of its own," said Berger, attributing part of the show's continued popularity to word of mouth.

According to Haas, Jazz at Sunset is "the essence of the experience of living in this community." He enjoys "seeing all the people enjoying every element of the experience — sitting, watching the sunset with a glass of wine or lemonade, holding hands — sharing the experience with their family and friends."

Haas and Berger both admit that the location has as much to do with the success of the event as the show itself.

Haas remembered that a Swiss film crew making a special on the Great Lakes came to one of his Jazz at Sunset shows.

"They were just in awe of the surroundings and the experience — and they live in the Alps," he said.

The Jeff Haas Trio is currently mixing and mastering

an album titled "Jazz at Sunset." A CD release party will be held in August to celebrate the album and the 10th anniversary of Jazz at Sunset.



Record-Eagle/Andy Taylor-Fabe

The Jeff Haas Trio features Haas on piano, Jack Dryden at the upright bass and John Alfieri at the drums (not pictured).



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