



## Artichoke Festival Celebrates 60 Years

BY RENEE BRINCKS

**Actress Marilyn Monroe was named California artichoke queen in Castroville in 1948. The Artichoke Food & Wine Festival is still going strong after six decades.**

**E**leven years after Castroville-area growers named Norma Jeane Mortenson—who later earned fame as Marilyn Monroe—an honorary California artichoke queen, community members founded a festival to celebrate what is now California's state vegetable.

On June 1 and 2, the Castroville Artichoke Food & Wine Festival celebrates 60 years.

"I marvel that we've reached 60," says California Artichoke Advisory Board Manager Pat Hopper. "It says something about the artichoke's draw. It's got mystique. It's got prestige. People think it's something special."

Though the festival recently moved to the Monterey County Fair & Event Center, it still benefits schools and nonprofits in the Artichoke Center of the World.

"Since 2008 alone, we've given over half a

million dollars back to the Castroville community," says Kathryn Parish, Castroville Artichoke Festival president.

Parish's parents were among the original festival volunteers. Today, she helps organize the event's cooking demonstrations, field tours, farmers market, scholarship presentations, and wine and beer garden. Attendees can participate in artichoke eating competitions, create agricultural art or catch live music. New 2019 highlights include a festival cookbook and a Marilyn Monroe look-alike contest.

"This is an important event for Castroville," Parish says. "Many of our residents work in the artichoke fields and farm offices. Lives here are shaped by this industry."

*For details, please visit [www.artichokefestival.org](http://www.artichokefestival.org).*