



HAVE YOUR CAKE AND EAT IT TOO: Chef of Food Network's "Cupcake Wars" featured at Pinehurst Food and Wine Festival Sept. 2-6

Village of Pinehurst, N.C. (June 24, 2010) - Florian Bellanger wears a stern face as judge of Food Network's current season of "Cupcake Wars." Over Labor Day Weekend, guests of Pinehurst's 22nd annual Food and Wine Festival will have a chance to judge him. Bellanger is one of a dozen featured chefs who promise to delight a crowd of nearly 1,000 attendees with the 2010 theme: "Old World vs. New, Modern vs. Traditional."

The Festival, held annually at Pinehurst Resort, draws the best in international wine and culinary talent and is designed to celebrate the harvest with a rich four-day line up of seminars, culinary demonstrations, and evening galas.

"We have embraced this year's theme in new and unexpected ways," said Pinehurst Food and Beverage Director Ed Peckels. "In the historic setting of the resort, we bring new age cooking techniques, new world wines, and very modern techniques to both food and wine. It will be a fun education for all."

The event begins Thursday, Sept. 2 with the Festival Focus Wine Competition, in which wine experts and guests will have equal votes in determining best in class in Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. New to the festival this year, the competition will also include a North Carolina-specific category as well.

Those wines will be featured at Wine Fest Central, which will display and sell at festival-only prices the more than 100 wine labels that are brought in from the four corners specifically for the event.

Luis Torres, co-founder of Constellation's Academy of Wine, will return as Master of Ceremonies, leading an all-star lineup of 13 seminars. He'll officially toast the festival at Friday Night's "Wine in the New Age" food and wine extravaganza by sabering a bottle of champagne, with a very modern twist.

"There is great value in the wine world today – and innovation as well," said Torres. "New age techniques in both food and wine blend flawlessly with timeless, age-old approaches that have stood the test of time. The combination is fascinating, and we're excited to bring it to our guests."

Torres on Saturday morning will present a powerhouse of bold Cabernets and vibrant Chardonnays from the state of Washington.

Other seminar topics range from Food and Wine Pairing sessions to New Age wines. French Wine, Made New, is foiled with Argentina's Malbec. Scott Daniel, wine expert from esteemed Blue Restaurant in Charlotte will present Hip Summer Sips, while Lawrence Lohr of J Lohr Winery presents the new Central Coast vineyards of California.

Greg Fowler, Director of Winemaking for Constellation Wines, will tie them all together with a seminar on "Wine Styles of the Future: Modern and Traditional Winemaking Working Together."

Pair them with a Culinary Demonstration Saturday morning and Bellanger's Pastry Demonstration on Sunday, and the line up will tease even a wary palate back to life.

The Grand Gourmet Gala on Saturday evening features a gourmet, four-course formal dinner, with each course prepared by a different presenting chef and paired expertly with vintage wine. Live music finishes the evening with dancing in celebration.

Saturday's Wine Luncheon offers tastes of the Old World, and Sunday's Ultimate Brunch will leave little room for dessert.

But perhaps the star of the weekend will be Saturday evening's Prestige Dinner featuring Schramsberg, the chief sparkling from the Napa Valley that has been served in the White House for more than 50 years. The special dinner for only the first 24 will match haute cuisine with the elixir of the gods.

Sunday's Taste of the South finishes the event, with a silent auction to benefit local charities, Carolina chefs, and a garden of state-bottled wines along with over 24 tables of international sips.

It's amazing that the rate starts only at \$292 per person per night for all events – or that local guests can purchase individual event tickets for as little as \$30.

American Airlines serves as sponsor for the weekend, offering discounted fares for Food and Wine Fest travelers, with discounts on shipping wines home.

See pinhurstwinefest.com for a complete list of presenting chefs and wine experts or call 800-487-4653 for reservations and more information.