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The Asheville Wine & Food Festival Celebrates the City's Thriving Local Culinary Scene

May 2, 2013 (Asheville, NC) – For the fifth year running, food lovers can sip and savor at the Asheville Wine & Food Festival, held August 22-24. A gastronomic mecca in the midst of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Asheville’s local-centric culture offers the backdrop for a burgeoning food and drink scene that continues to receive national recognition.

Ticketed events throughout the weekend highlight the area’s top chefs, artisan food producers, craft brewers, as well as the finest regional and international wines. A prevailing farm-to-festival vibe gives visitors the chance to support and appreciate where (and who) the food comes from. In between signature events, festivalgoers will have the chance to experience the culinary landscape through a *mélange* ticketed dinners.

The New York Post calls the Asheville Wine & Food Festival one of the “8 Tasty Festivals” in the country that’s all about the food, and *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* named it one of the “10 Southern Festivals You Need to Taste.”

The three-day culinary celebration features three signature events:

ELIXIR. (NEW!)

Formerly a featured event at the Grand Tasting, this high-spirited bartenders’ brawl has grown into its own affair. Inspect and imbibe as the best local mixologists go up against each other to see who can create the most inspired (and delicious) craft cocktail using regionally and nationally produced spirits.

Thursday, August 22, 6-8 p.m., at The Venue, 21 N. Market Street. Tickets: \$45.

SWEET.

Prepare for delicious decadence with a smorgasbord of luscious desserts and confections, sparkling and dessert wines, and specialty cocktails and spirits. The cherry on top: a chocolate competition featuring edible works of art from top local bakers and pastry chefs.

Friday, August 23, 7:30-10 p.m. at The Grove Arcade, 1 Page Avenue. Tickets: \$45.

GRAND TASTING.

The weekend's main event brings the best of Asheville's epicurean scene under one roof. Festivalgoers will get a true taste of the Asheville culinary experience through cooking demonstrations, regional, national, and international wines, cuisine from exceptional local restaurants, craft beer and spirits, an amateur winemaker competition, and samples of small-batch specialty products. This year's WNC Chefs Challenge finale, held during the Grand Tasting, pits the two remaining contestants in an *Iron Chef*-style "food fight" as they compete for the title of Best Chef in WNC.

Saturday, August 24 at the U.S. Cellular Center, 87 Haywood Street. \$55 general admission, 1-5 p.m.; \$75 VIP, 12-5 p.m. VIPs receive early admission to the Festival and access to the VIP lounge, a gourmet salon of exclusive bites, sips and entertainment.

Purchase tickets and learn more at ashevillewineandfood.com.