

Birds of a Feather to flock to Annual Sugar Land Wine & Food Affair

Food and wine enthusiasts to celebrate the event's 10th year

Houston, Texas, January 16, 2013 – The 2013 Sugar Land Wine & Food Affair (www.sugarlandwineandfoodaffair.com) is set for April 24 – 28, 2013, marking the tenth year of irresistible food finds, wines, celebrity chefs, mixology and unabashed merriment. One of Texas's largest wine and food affairs will celebrate a milestone birthday and is expected to attract more than 7,000 attendees over the five-day event. Proceeds support a permanent scholarship endowment at the University of Houston Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management.

The Sugar Land Wine & Food Affair has come to be one of the most anticipated culinary attractions of the year in Texas. Located in historic Sugar Land just minutes from Houston proper, its multiple tastings, dinners, cooking demonstrations and seminars have gained a reputation for a rollicking good time where chefs share secrets, sommeliers get un-corked and attendees have exclusive access to the best food and wine available.

The event has its roots firmly planted in culinary history. Even its location in Sugar Land is a reverent nod to the fertile soil that has produced the sugar that has sweetened countless American kitchens, as Sugar Land, has been home to Imperial Sugar since its founding in 1843. The most attended event, Saturday's Sip & Stroll takes place on the grounds of the former Imperial Sugar factory and Char House, both of which are iconic images that dominated the flat plains for miles and spoke to the prosperity and entrepreneurial spirit of the region.

The five-day wine and food affair kicks off starts with a VIP dinner, followed by three days of events and pop, swizzle and stir tastings. Many of America's top regional chefs will be on hand for demonstrations including – Chef Jeffrey Balfour of Citrus at Hotel Valencia Riverwalk, Chef Peng Looi of August Moon Chinese Bistro & Asiatique, Chef Brian McNamara of Jasper The Woodlands, Chef Neal Cox of Olivette at The Houstonian, Chef Ricky Cruz of Grotto Ristorante, Chef John Signorelli of The Remington at The St. Regis Houston, Chefs/Owners Shanna Horner O'Hea and Brian O'Hea of The Kennebunk Inn and *Academe* Maine Brasserie & Tavern, Chef Rebecca Masson of Fluff Bake Bar, Chef Jovi Beiz, Chef Randy Evans of Haven, Chef John Sheely of Mockingbird Bistro, Restaurateur/Chef Shawn Cirkiel, Chef Ronnie Killen of Killen Steakhouse, and Chef Junnajat "Jett" Hurapan of Blu Restaurant & Lounge. Attendees will also sample an extensive range of premium wines, craft beers and spirits.

A quick round-up of activities includes the following:

April 24: VIP Kick-off dinner

April 25: On the Rocks Bartender Challenge at Post Oak Grill Sugar Land

April 26: Fred Parks Wine Seminar

Spirits Seminar

The Grand Tasting – Marriott Sugar Land Town Square

April 27: Sip & Stroll at Imperial Sugar Land

April 28: Bistro Brunch at Sugar Land Town Square

The Sugar Land Wine & Food Affair is produced by the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with the University of Houston's Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management. This year a team from the school will assist in the event production under the guidance of director Krystal Peay.

To date the event has raised more than \$250,000 for scholarships awarded to students pursuing careers in the hospitality field.

“It's hard to believe this will be our tenth year,” said Keri Schmidt, president and CEO of the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce and founder of the Sugar Land Wine & Food Affair. “I am thrilled to be joined by our new director, Krystal Peay as we celebrate a decade of great wine and food.”

Tickets for individual events are priced from \$40-\$150. A three-day VIP Grand Pass with access to The Grand Tasting, Sip & Stroll and Bistro Brunch may be purchased for \$200. Special hotel packages are available from sponsor hotels the Sugar Land Marriott Town Square and Hyatt Place Houston/Sugar Land.

Ticket purchases and additional information are available at www.sugarlandwineandfoodaffair.com or 713.SIP-WINE (713.747.9463) News and listings of attending chefs and presenting wine, beer and spirit providers is showcased on Facebook at www.facebook.com/sugarlandwineandfoodaffair and Twitter at www.twitter.com/SLFood.

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Media contacts: Melissa Stevens/Hilary Rosenstein

Stevens Group

713-419-0000