

June 1, 2010

**OMG**~~ Was that May that went by at such blinding speed? Guess so. But, if you think that an events-filled May was a blur, wait until you see what's coming up. The next two weeks are gonna make May look slow. Headlining hundreds of food-, wine-, spirits- and brews-related activities not to be missed are the Savor Artisan Craft Beer event, the RAMMYs, the Smithsonian Savoring Sustainable Seafood Weekend, Tarara Winery's Viognier Wine Festival and the National Harbor's Food & Wine Festival. All happening, here locally in just the first to weeks of June. Check out all the details in Local Events.

Just in case you haven't heard, there's the old, "good news/bad news" coming out of the local restaurant scene. After suffering through a devastating fire and seemingly interminable renovation process, Todd and Ellen Gray's peerless Equinox restaurant has reopened (see, Openings). In the interim, while both Todd and Ellen have been overseeing Equinox's Phoenix-like rise from the ashes, Todd has been keeping fine food front of his loyal patrons, thanks to help from many good friends in the local restaurant community, while also doing some private chef stints (Full disclosure, we' were there for a tasting -- we tasted -- we know what's in store!).

But, for every yang, there's a yin. Sadly, we report that Inox has indeed closed after months of speculation. The joint project owned and run by chefs John Mathieson and Jonathan Krinn (both previously with 2941), Inox will be missed. But, we expect Jon and John (and John Wabeck, Inox's Wine Director) to resurface soon, and trust us, once we know, we will let you know too.

And, for real yin, there's the Gulf Coast oil spill, a mess on every possible ecological, environmental, social, recreational scale. People from all walks of life and from all parts of the country are doing whatever they can to ameliorate the damage - and that includes local chefs. The All Aboard (Raise Money for Fisherman Along the Coast) fundraiser will be held in Union Station on June 8 and 9. On those days, the Patrón Tequila Epicurean Express will feature a home team of DC's finest chefs working alongside Louisiana chefs in its galley to raise funds for the St. Bernard Project - helping the people of New Orleans get back on their feet, back in their houses and back to work following Katrina, and most recently, the oil spill.

A roster of chefs including New Orleans' own, Brian Landry of Galatoire's and Greg Reggio of Zea's Rotisserie Grill, as well as local, Southern-style chefs. Ann Cashion, RJ Cooper, pastry chef David Guas, Jeff Tunks and Robert Wiedmaier will serve up hors d'oeuvres at the Tuesday evening cocktail party and a complete seated dinner on Wednesday June 9. Also, legislative conductors involved as honorary hosts include Congressman Charlie and Peachy Melancon and Louisiana Senator Mary Landrieu. No worries about over-imbibing on this rail-journey: the train's not actually leaving the station, but 100% of all proceeds help the St. Bernard Project, founded by D.C. native, Liz McCartney, so that it can keep chugging along, helping the people of the New Orleans area. Want to know more? Check out both the Buzz and Local Events for all the deets.

Of course that's not all that's in the Buzz. As always, we find all the great insider tips about what's happening and what to do on the local food scene. Check this issue's Buzz for news about D.C. upcoming Restaurant Week for Kids, about new farmers markets popping up, new summer thirst quenchers and much (seriously, much) more.

In our exclusive Chef's Column, we continue our focus on nominees for the upcoming RAMMY awards, the local restaurant industry's version of the Oscars. In this issues Chef's Column, we check out nominees for one of the four publicly voted categories, Neighborhood Gathering Place. Nominees are all friendly neighborhood restaurants that demonstrate a high standard of quality and congeniality rooted in their neighborhoods. TheListAreYouOnIt.com was able to catch up with the nominees and find out what makes them such popular spots for locals and neighbors. Find out what Cork Wine Bar Owners Diane Gross and Khalid Pitts; Bar Pilar Executive Chef Justin Bittner; EatBar's Executive Chef Barry Koslow, and Kemble Park Tavern's Chef de Cuisine Brandon Ingenito had to say about whom else's cooking they secretly love and other insider info from these RAMMY contenders.

In Grapes & More, we're talking to even more RAMMY nominees; this time for Wine Program of the Year. You'll hear from 2941's Matthew Carroll, an Advanced Sommelier through the Court of Master Sommeliers; Citronelle's Sommelier Kathy Morgan; Dino's Owner and resident wine expert, Dean Gold; Sommelier and Mixologist Brent Kroll, speaking for Ashok Bajaj's nominated Knightsbridge group of award-winning restaurants (Rasika, Bombay Club, The Oval Room, 701, Bibiana, Ardeo, Bardeo), and Proof's talented Wine Director Sebastian Zutant. The only way you're going to know this group's innermost thoughts on the eve of the RAMMYs is to read them in Grapes & More.

This issue of TheListAreYouOnIt.com was a bear to pull together, and a blast to do - I don't think I've ever been this excited about a line-up of things to do, see and learn than I am about this issue's offering. So, dig into The List, find what you love to do, get out there and...Enjoy!