



MEDIA RELEASE

And The Winner is Marc Lepine From Atelier in Ottawa!

February 13th, 2012 Kelowna B.C. - The competition was fierce, the determination was evident as nine of Canada's best chefs competed for top honours during the coveted Gold Medal Plates Canadian Culinary Championships on February 10 and 11, 2012 in Kelowna, B.C.

The new Champion, Marc Lepine from Atelier, in Ottawa, won with his delicious dish of Quadra Island Scallops with potatoes, Truffle, Chanterelle, Chorizo and Lemon - paired with Hidden Bench 2009 Estate Chardonnay from the Beamsville Bench in Niagara. His reaction when he realized he won – "I could not have done it without my team, I looked around to make eye contact and thank them all. I was so happy for them and for us, this truly was a team event!"

Amid high fives, cheers, applause and tears the winners of the bronze and silver medals were announced. Jean-Phillipe St-Denis, from Kitchen Gallerie Poisson, Montreal, took the bronze, and the silver was awarded to Rob Feenie of Cactus Club Restaurants, Vancouver.

The two-day event started with a Friday evening Mystery Wine Pairing at the Hotel Eldorado, where chefs prepared a dish they felt perfectly suited the mystery bottle of wine they had received the evening before. This year the chefs were given the 2008 Old Vines Riesling from Chateau des Charmes in Niagara. They were also given \$500 to shop for ingredients to provide small plate nosh for the 300-plus guests in attendance. Invited guests were able to taste the chefs' creations and cast their own ballot. Emerging as the people's choice winner for this single event was in fact the ultimate winner - Chef Marc Lepine from Ottawa. The guests are pretty savvy in Kelowna!

The second event was a Black Box Challenge held at Okanagan College which provided high drama as the nine competing chefs had one hour to prepare two dishes for each of the judges using six mystery ingredients. Last year the ingredients were all from B.C. This year they were from across Canada. From Newfoundland there were jars of bakeapples (also known as cloudberries), from Mariposa Farm outside Ottawa, there were goose breasts, and from Montreal, a firm blue cheese called Le Rassembleu. Manitoba's contribution was a one-pound bag of Shoal Lake Oh Canada wild rice. From Saskatchewan came some splendid Lake Diefenbaker steelhead trout and from Calgary, two pounds of parsley roots. The challenge for the chefs was to combine these unique ingredients.

The Grand Finale at the Delta Grand Hotel saw the nine chefs competing in an all-out slamdown competition; dishes were partnered with their chosen winery. The evening was simply delicious, with the very best of Canada's culinary scene fully in evidence.

James Chatto, Gold Medal Plates national culinary advisor and head judge, was very impressed with this year's competitors. Experienced veterans and eager young bloods battled for the recognition to be called the best in Canada. He said, "I think this was the smoothest, purest Canadian Culinary Championships event we have ever had."

The Grand Finale event at the Delta Grand Okanagan was the hottest ticket in town. Playing to a sold-out audience of 600 wine and food enthusiasts were Ed Robertson from the Bare Naked Ladies and Barney Bentall who headlined the entertainment. Olympians and Paralympians in attendance included three contenders for

medals at the Olympic Games in London: Adam van Koeverden (Olympic Gold, Silver and Bronze medallist in canoe kayak), Scott Frandsen (Olympic Silver medallist in rowing) and Catherine Pendrel (World Champion in mountain biking). Also in attendance were local sweetheart Kelsey Serwa (World Champion in ski cross) Chris Le Bihan (Olympic Bronze medallist in bobsleigh), Kristi Richards (Olympian in freestyle skiing) and Michelle Cameron (Olympic Bronze medallist in synchronized swimming) Adam van Koeverden (the emcee for the event) remarked: “Truly this event has outdone itself again!”

As well as indulging in amazing food and wine, Saturday night guests were able to compete for items during the live auction. Some of the items up for bid were experiences hosted by Olympians and celebrities and included under the Tuscan Sun with Jim Cuddy, and Wining and Dining in Napa with Olympic Gold medallists Alexandre Bilodeau and Jennifer Heil.

Stephen Leckie co-founder of Gold Medal Plates said, “ This year's Canadian Culinary Championships was everything we dreamed of for an outstanding success: great competitors, wonderful food and wine, outstanding Olympians and musicians, flawless execution and a great audience. It made for our best championships ever! A very big salute to Kelowna for co-staging this with us!

This memorable two-day event will be held in Kelowna for five years with proceeds from Gold Medal Plates given to the Canadian Olympic Foundation to support high performance athletes.

Photos on Dropbox: <http://bit.ly/zWIusY>

(Clicking on thumbnail will enlarge photo. At the bottom of that photo, there are links to expand or save)

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About The Canadian Culinary Championships

The Canadian Culinary Championships is the finale of Gold Medal Plates - the ultimate celebration of Canadian Excellence in cuisine, wine, entertainment and athletic achievement. Celebrated in nine cities across Canada in 2011, Gold Medal Plates featured superb wines and the premier chefs in each city in a competition to crown a gold, silver and bronze medal culinary team in each city, and subsequently nation-wide at the Canadian Culinary Championships.

Founded in 2003, the goal of Gold Medal Plates is to raise substantial funds for Canada’s high performance athletes, while celebrating Canadian excellence. Since 2004, this event has received tremendous support and accolades all across Canada, and generated a combined net total of \$5 million for Canada’s Olympic and Paralympic athletes! For more information, visit the Gold Medal Plates website www.goldmedalplates.com

The Canadian Olympic Foundation – Beneficiary of the Events

Net proceeds from Gold Medal Plates are given to the Canadian Olympic Foundation to support athletes through high performance programs such as Own the Podium. To learn more about the foundation and the programs it funds, please visit www.olympicfoundation.ca