



Mystery Wine Revealed As Canadian Culinary Championships' First Competition Ends

For Immediate Release
Friday, February 6, 2015

Kelowna, BC - The first of three challenging competitions is now completed at the 2015 Canadian Culinary Championships with Chef Mark McCrowe from Aqua Kitchen/Bar of St. John's, Newfoundland, winning the People's Choice award. The award does not affect the official judging scores for the ultimate title – the 2015 Canadian Culinary Champion - but it is a nice feather in the cap for Chef McCrowe.

"It feels good to win the People's Choice Award this evening," says Chef McCrowe. "We are blown away by the response. We didn't expect to win. There is certainly still a lot to go. The win gives us an extra boost of energy and confidence going into the next competitions. It is far from over!"

The Mystery Wine Competition is the first of three gruelling challenges for the competing chefs, each of whom has won the Gold Medal Plates competition qualifying event in their respective cities. Less than 24 hours before the Mystery Wine Competition, they were given the Mystery Wine – a 2012 Pinotage from Stoneboat Vineyards in the Okanagan Valley, along with a food budget of \$600 with which to feed 500 guests. This morning they had to decide on the perfect dish to pair with the wine and then find all of the ingredients in Kelowna. None of the chefs were familiar with local suppliers or shops, so they had to depend on their creativity and ingenuity.

David Lawrason, national wine advisor for Gold Medal Plates was instrumental in choosing the Mystery Wine for this year's competition. "The point of the Mystery Wine is to challenge chefs to pair a dish without a textbook. The weight and structure of this year's wine was not difficult; it's a firm, young medium weight red that steered most chefs into red meats. But the flavours are not Pinot, not Syrah, not Merlot – so, I was really looking for nuances in the recipes that caught the slightly meaty, tarry character of Pinotage - a grape developed in South Africa by crossing Pinot Noir and a Rhone variety called Cinsault."

The competition continues with the dramatic Black Box competition Saturday morning and the Grand Finale on Saturday night, when the top three chefs will soon be standing on the podium.

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Canadian Culinary Championships Background - Gold Medal Plates' winning chefs from 11 Canadian cities, coast to coast will compete in the ultimate contest to crown Canada's #1 Chef in February, 2015. The Grand Finale of Gold Medal Plates (the Canadian Culinary Championships) is a national project celebrating Canadian excellence in food, wine, sport and entertainment. Net proceeds from Gold Medal Plates (\$9.5 million to date) are given to the Canadian Olympic Foundation which supports Olympic athletes and high performance programs such as 'Own the Podium'. Kelowna is now home to this prestigious Canadian competition for the next 5 years.

Canadian Olympic Foundation – The Beneficiary of the events: The Canadian Olympic Foundation is a national charitable organization created by the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) supporting high performance athletes across all winter and summer sports. The Foundation's Mission is to generate support to meet the technical, scientific, medical and coaching needs of Canada's high performance sport system and assist Canada's athletes in becoming ambassadors for sport, healthy living and the pursuit of excellence across the nation. Net proceeds from Gold Medal Plates are given to

the Canadian Olympic Foundation to support high performance programs such as Own the Podium. To learn more about the Foundation and the programs it funds, please visit www.olympicfoundation.ca