

2016 Naples Winter Wine Festival

Ex-skater Boitano to be among chefs who will cook for patrons

By Jenna Buzzacco-Foerster
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There will be James Beard Award winners, culinary celebrities and even an Olympic figure skater.

On Tuesday, organizers of the 2016 Naples Winter Wine Festival disclosed the lineup of chefs for the annual event, which will take place Jan. 29-31 and benefit the Naples Children & Education Foundation.

The annual event raises millions of dollars each year through one of the world's top wine auctions.

The festival also gives patrons a chance to be wine and dined during a vintner dinner on the Friday night before the auction.

Maria Jimenez-Lara, the CEO of the Naples Children & Education Foundation, said festival organizers are intimately involved in selecting the chefs that will be in attendance.

While many of the chefs are award-winning chefs, Jimenez-Lara said that isn't a deciding factor. Organizers also take suggestions from vintners and past participation into consideration. And some chefs, she said, are favorites of foundation trustees.

The dinners are one of the first chances for patrons to understand "that this is a very special event for a very special reason."

Twelve of the 23 chefs will be participating in the festival for the first time. Brian Boitano, host of the Food Network's "What would Brian Boitano Make?" is one. Boitano won gold in the 1988 Winter Olympics in the men's singles figure skating competition. In the years since, he has become a celebrity chef, publishing a cookbook in 2013.

Jimenez-Lara said she will be excited to see the chef side of Boitano and also is looking forward to seeing familiar faces.

Rick Tramonto, the 2016 chef de cuisine, will return to the festival for the sixth time. He will be joined by his partner John Folse of Restaurant R'evolution in New Orleans.

Boitano won gold in the 1988 Winter Olympics in men's singles figure skating. He has become a celebrity chef, publishing a cookbook in 2013.

Folse also will be a returning chef. Jimenez-Lara said the fact so many chefs repeatedly take part in the festival "shows their commitment and support to the cause."

"When you're fundraising, you're also fundraising, and many of these chefs have become friends," she said. "It's a vote of confidence."

Tickets for the 2016 Naples Winter Wine Festival start at \$10,000 per couple. The festival will be limited to 580 guests.

THE 23 CHEFS:

Colin Bedford, The Fearington House Restaurant, Pittsboro, North Carolina; **Brian Boitano**, host of Food Network's "What Would Brian Make," San Francisco; **Nash Cagnetti**, Tra Vigne, St. Helena, California; **Gary Danko**, Restaurant Gary Danko, San Francisco;

Curtis Duffy, Grace, Chicago; **John Folse**, Restaurant R'evolution, New Orleans; **Ken Frank**, La Toque in Napa, California; **Sarah Grueneberg**, Monteverde, Chicago;

Jen Jasinski, Rioja, Denver; **Daniel Joly**, Mirabelle, Beaver Creek, Colorado; **Gerry Klaskala**, Aria, Atlanta; **Emily Luchetti Marlowe**, Park Tavern and The Cavalier, San Francisco;

Tory Miller, L'Etoile, Madison, Wisconsin; **Nancy Oakes**, Boulevard Restaurant San Francisco; **Patrick O'Connell**, The Inn at Little Washington, St. Washington, Virginia; **Richard Reddington**, REDD and Redd Wood, Yountville, California;

Bryce Shuman, Betony, New York, New York; **Holly Smith**, Café Juanita, Kirkland, Washington; **Craig Stoll**, Delfina, San Francisco; **Ari Taymor**, Alma Restaurant, Los Angeles;

Bill Telepan, Telepan, New York, New York; **Rick Tramonto**, Restaurant R'evolution, New Orleans; and **Dustin Valette**, Valette, Healdsburg, California.



Brian Boitano



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