



NAPLES WINTER WINE FESTIVAL 25 YEARS

### **Traditional Italian Chef Angelo Auriana to be Saluted as Chef de Cuisine at the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Naples Winter Wine Festival on January 24-26, 2025**

**Naples, FL** (June 18, 2024) – The Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF), founders of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, announced that Angelo Auriana, the innovative celebrity chef behind The Factory Kitchen and BRERA Ristorante, will be saluted as Chef de Cuisine at the 25<sup>th</sup> annual Naples Winter Wine Festival on January 24-26, 2025 at The Ritz-Carlton Naples, Tiburón.

A native of Bergamo, Italy, near the culinary capital of Milan, Auriana graduated with honors from the prestigious San Pellegrino Hotel School at age 17. Auriana made his way to California in 1985, where he helped with the opening of “Primi un Ristorante” shortly after becoming executive chef of “Valentino Ristorante” during his tenure of more than 18 years in Valentino’s kitchen.

In 2013, Auriana partnered with Matteo Ferdinandi and Francine Diamond-Ferdinandi to launch Factory Place Hospitality Group, opening the trattoria-style The Factory Kitchen that year followed by the Milan-inspired BRERA Ristorante in 2016. Both restaurants reflect the veteran chef’s pride in Italian cuisine and heartfelt desire to introduce diners to authentic dishes from Northern Italy.

“I am thrilled to be recognized as the 2025 Chef de Cuisine for the Naples Winter Wine Festival, one of the world’s most prestigious charity wine auctions,” Auriana said. “It will be a privilege to participate in the Festival for a ninth time over its 25-year history, including some of the very early years. I am always awestruck by the commitment to improving the lives of children in need.”

Utilizing seasonal California produce and traditional techniques, Auriana opened his first solo restaurant, Masque Ristorante, in 2003 with partner Niki Riviuccio in El Dorado Hills prestigious complex La Borgata. The restaurant was awarded *Esquire Magazine’s* “Best New Restaurant of the Year” in 2004, and became the new standard in the restaurant industry of the area.

Later, after partnering on the successful launch of Factory Place Hospitality Group, Auriana and Ferdinani expanded their award-winning concepts to Las Vegas, opening Matteo’s Ristorante Italiano and BRERA Osteria in the Italian-themed Venetian Resort along the Las Vegas Strip.

Today, Auriana divides his time between Los Angeles and Las Vegas, continually developing menus and sharing his love for cooking through classes, tasting menus, wine collector food and wine pairings. Auriana also holds an honorary diploma from the mayor of Bergamo, Italy for sharing the town’s culture and traditions with the United States via his Italian Heritage Cuisine.

“Angelo’s passion for authentic Italian cuisine and fine wines make him the ideal choice as our 2025 Chef de Cuisine,” said Jeff Gargiulo, 2025 Chef Committee Co-Chair. “Joining him for our Silver Anniversary is an impressive list of other world-renowned chefs, acclaimed vintners and expert sommeliers, setting the stage for a weekend of unique, one-of-a-kind food and wine experiences.”

The 25<sup>th</sup> annual NWWF comes following the record-breaking event in January 2024 during which over \$33 million was raised. Funds are distributed by NCEF via grants to individual nonprofits and multi-partner, multi-year strategic initiatives focusing on the well-being of the whole child, including early learning, healthcare, hunger, mental health, oral health, out-of-school time and vision.

Festival guests will once again join in this charitable mission in 2025 as they bid on incredible, one-of-a-kind experiences during the famed live auction, part of a weekend that will also feature intimate dinners in elegant, private homes and settings showcasing world-class food and wine.

The weekend will pay homage to the past while looking forward to the future. As a nod to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, this year’s Festival will be led by a team of several NCEF Trustees, all of whom have previously chaired the NWWF, including some who were involved in the very first Festival in 2001.

Ticket packages for the 2025 Naples Winter Wine Festival start at \$17,500 per couple for a Double Magnum package and \$40,000 for two couples to experience a Jeroboam Package. For additional information, please visit: [napleswinefestival.com/about-the-festival](https://napleswinefestival.com/about-the-festival).

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### **About Naples Winter Wine Festival**

The Naples Winter Wine Festival (NWWF), one of the world's most prestigious charity wine auctions, offers a weekend of unforgettable memories. Guests enjoy world-class food and wine during intimate dinners in elegant, private homes and other landmark settings throughout Naples and are invited to bid on once-in-a-lifetime travel and wine experiences during an electrifying live auction. Since its inaugural event in 2001, the NWWF has raised almost \$302 million, making a profound difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of children in Collier County.

### **About Naples Children & Education Foundation**

The Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF), the founding organization of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, is improving the educational, emotional and health outcomes of underprivileged and at-risk children. Through its annual grants and strategic initiatives, NCEF has impacted close to 90 of the most effective nonprofits in the local community, providing more than 300,000 children with the services and resources they need to excel. NCEF's unique approach, which emphasizes collaboration between organizations and bridges public and private resources, has become a blueprint for how to transform a community, one issue at a time.

For additional information on the Naples Children & Education Foundation or the Naples Winter Wine Festival, contact Lisa Juliano at [lisa@napleswinefestival.com](mailto:lisa@napleswinefestival.com) or 239-514-2239.