

Dispatches

PORTLAND

Ready to rumble: Harvest on the Harbor competitors

If you have tickets to this year's Maine Lobster Chef of the Year competition at Harvest on the Harbor, here's some good news: You'll have a seat. If you don't have tickets, here's the bad news: It's already sold out.

The most popular event at the Portland food festival, now in its eighth year, will again be a seated affair after last year's grazing format prompted considerable grumbling from guests. Competitors will cook their lobster dishes live on stage in the Ocean View Room at Ocean Gateway, while ticketholders and a judging panel watch, then sample what they've made. The winning chef gets bragging rights and a \$1,000 check.

The chefs vying for the coveted title this year were announced on Tuesday morning at a press preview hosted by festival organizers, the Greater Portland Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). Stephen Richards of Mine Oyster in Boothbay Harbor will defend his 2014 win against Matt Ginn of EVO, Portland; Josh Berry of Union, Portland; Isaac Aldrich of Pilot House at Sebasco Harbor Resort, Phippsburg; and Nicholas Krunkkala of The Thistle Inn, Boothbay Harbor (who claimed his spot by winning the annual Claw Down competition in Boothbay last week).

The judges are Portland chefs Larry Matthews of Back Bay Grill, Steve Corry of Five Fifty-Five, and Harding Lee Smith of The Rooms; Maine author

and boat captain Linda Greenlaw Wessel; and Virginia Wright, senior editor at DownEast Magazine.

This year, the five-day Harvest on the Harbor kicks off on Oct. 21 with a new event, the Moonlight Gala at The Landing at Pine Point in Scarborough. Ten chefs will join together to prepare a five-course meal, each course accompanied by wines from Marchesi di Barolo of Piedmont, Italy. Live big band music for dancing follows the dinner, and free bus transportation from Portland is available.

A similar event takes place on Oct. 22 - the Stage Dinner at Merrill Auditorium, which debuted last year. Both dinners are emceed by Erica Archer of Wine Wise Events in Portland.

On Oct. 23, the Top of the Crop chef competition is back after a hiatus last year. For 2015, each chef will be paired with a Maine farm. The participants are Cara Stadler of Bao Bao, Portland and Tao Yuan, Brunswick; Colin Kelly of Gather,

Yarmouth; Stephen Richards of Mine Oyster, Boothbay Harbor; Tom Sigler of Comida, Rockland; David Pendexter of Brunswick Tavern, Brunswick; Tony Rosenfeld of b.good, Portland; and Daron Goldstein of Rudy's, Cape Elizabeth.

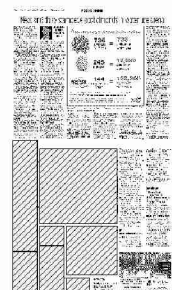
Other festival highlights are a beer and whiskey crawl through Portland's East Bayside neighborhood, craft cocktails at The Custom House, and Rock 'n' Roast - Barbecue with a Twist, held at the Portland Company and featuring a pig roast.

Among the announcements on Tuesday morning was that Elliot Farmer, star of Food Network's "Cutthroat Kitchen," will be a guest chef at The Maine Marketplace on Oct. 24 and a judge at the barbecue event on Oct. 25. Joining him to judge barbecue will be chef Shannon Bard of Zapoteca in Portland. Good Shepherd Food Bank will again be the nonprofit beneficiary of the food and wine festival.

For tickets go to harvestontheharbor.com.



Silas Aldrich, 4, of Topsham, looks over lamb meatballs with roasted corn tzaziki from Sea Glass at Inn by the Sea in Cape Elizabeth at the Harvest on the Harbor preview event held Tuesday at Ocean Gateway. Silas' father is Isaac Aldrich of The Pilot House at Sebasco Harbor Resort.





Photos by Derek Davis/Staff Photographer

Contenders in the Maine Lobster Chef of the Year cookoff at the annual Harvest on the Harbor event in October are, from left, Josh Berry of Union in Portland; Nick Krunkkala of The Thistle Inn in Boothbay Harbor; Matt Ginn of EVO in Portland; Isaac Aldrich of The Pilot House at Sebasco Harbor Resort in Phippsburg; and Stephen Richards of Mine Oyster in Boothbay Harbor.