

EATING OUT

7TH Annual Food & Wine Extravaganza



Gala benefits area chefs

As athletes gear up for the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, chefs across Metro Detroit are honing their skills for a competition of their own on Feb. 12.

As part of the seventh annual Michigan Culinary Food & Wine Extravaganza a Mardi Gras benefit for the Michigan Culinary Team and Scholarship Fund, 20 area restaurants will present an artful display and tasting of their delicacies specially paired with an accompanying wine.

Guests at the "Fat Tuesday" celebration, hosted by Mac & Ray's Banquet & Conference Center, 30675 North River Road in Harrison Township, will cast their vote for the event's best restaurant, with the winner receiving a cash prize and trophy. A panel of food and wine writers, including the Observer & Eccentric's wine columnist Eleanor and Ray Heald, also will judge the restaurants to determine the best food and wine pairing and award a monetary prize to the winning restaurant.

You can read about the winners in an upcoming column by the Healds.

The event was founded as a way to generate funds that would help the Michigan Culinary Team compete in Germany every four years at the World Culinary Salon. We also have added a scholarship component which awards \$10,000 to local students who are pursuing their dream of becoming one of the great chefs of tomorrow.

Roger Petri
Chairperson of Michigan Culinary Food & Wine Extravaganza

The theme of the event is "Celebrating Mardi Gras," which will be immediately evident when guests arrive at a New Orleans street facade at the entrance. Decorative masks and colorful beads complete the official "Nawlins" atmosphere.

Adding to the festivities will be live music by Mel Ball and Colours, along with silent and live auctions, and a raffle, all in support of education for local chefs and aspiring culinary students.

The event was founded as a way to generate funds that would help the Michigan Culinary Team compete in Germany every four years at the World Culinary Salon," said Roger Petri, chairperson of Michigan Culinary Food & Wine Extravaganza and director of operations at Mac & Ray's. "We also have added a scholarship component which awards \$10,000 to local students who are pursuing their

dream of becoming one of the great chefs of tomorrow.

"We have received tremendous support each year from the hospitality community as well as our corporate sponsors such as Pettipiece and US Foodservice," added Petri. "We are pleased to host this event once again and look forward to another successful year as the community as a whole comes together in support of culinary education."

Participating restaurants include Beverly Hills Grill, Big Rock Chop House, Beans & Cornbread, Golden Mushroom, McCormick & Schmick and Andiamo restaurants.

The extravaganza runs from 6-10 p.m., on Tuesday, Feb. 12th. Tickets are \$75 for general admission and \$125 for Gold Salon and are available by calling (588) 463-8660 ext. 429 or 437.



New production: Lakeland Players members Shaun Pittman (left) Ken Kiurski and Marilyn Smale, rehearse *You Can't Take It With You*.

Waterford troupe stages comedy

Need a few laughs? Check out Lakeland Player's production, *You Can't Take It With You*, a comedy by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman.

Show time is 8 p.m., on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 1-2 and 8-9, at Mason Middle School, 3835 West Walton Boulevard, Waterford.

Admission is \$8 and \$7 for senior citizens and students.

The troupe will hold auditions for its next production, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, at 2 p.m., Feb. 10 and 7 p.m., Feb. 11, at Bartelli's, in the 300 Bowl, 100

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Aspiring actors should prepare a song and be ready to dance. Wear comfortable clothing for the audition.

South Cass Lake Road, just south of M-59.

Aspiring actors should prepare a song and be ready to dance. Wear comfortable clothing for the audition.

For more information, call Al Bartlett, director, at (248) 373-6438.

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