

Mt. Washington Alpine Food Festival's Sizzling Array of Culinary Events is led by the Alpine Cocktail Reception

Back by popular demand, the 3rd Annual Mt. Washington Alpine Food Festival returns with another spectacular lineup of culinary offerings. The schedule caters to every type of food enthusiast from the experienced gourmet to the casual grazer. By encouraging connections between local producers, chefs and consumers, the Alpine Food Festival provides a beautiful venue for a gastronomic journey celebrating local food and agriculture.

The event has become a highlight of Vancouver Island's food scene and provides a unique opportunity to mingle, learn and taste-test with local chefs, farmers, vintners, brewers and food artisans. An impressive collection of well-known Local and B.C. chefs are taking part in the event, headlined by Chef Anthony Sedlak, host of the Food Network's show *The Main*.

Taking place over the Labour Day long weekend, from Sept. 3-5, the festival features a sumptuous variety of cooking seminars, a sizzling cocktail reception, an expanded Alpine Marketplace, an exclusive seven-course gala dinner designed by Atlas Cafe executive chef Jonathan Frazier and Chef Sedlak, and much more.

Festivities begin with the Alpine Cocktail Reception on the evening of Friday, Sept. 3. The cocktail reception will serve up a feast of gourmet appetizers made fresh by over a dozen local chefs using local ingredients. Many dishes will include local seafood, ranging from steamed mussels and cedar plank salmon from Mt. Washington's kitchen team, to the smoked salmon delicacies of Campbell River's Flurer Smokery. Award-winning caterer Dawn McRae will recreate mouthwatering finger foods selected from *Island Inspirations*, the popular cookbook by the North Vancouver Island Chefs Association.

Special guest chefs at the cocktail reception include sushi master, Ky Taniguchi, who will roll up an artful array of sushi appetizers. Popular Indian chef and cookbook author Tahera Rawji will prepare an assortment of sweet and spicy Eastern dishes. Maria Elena will serve a savory variety of Mexican appetizers, including prawn ceviche, chorizo cheese tortillas and chipotle oysters, as well as offering a Tequila tasting on the side. The reception also features a presentation from Mary Ann and Edgar Smith, owners of the award-winning Natural Pastures Cheese Company. To cap off the evening, Belinda Jones of Cumberland's Gatehouse Bistro will layer together her signature dessert plate.

All hors d'oeuvres at the Alpine Cocktail Reception will be paired with Vancouver Island and BC wines, and Vancouver Island Brewery will be serving their original craft beers. Blue Moon Winery will offer their fine fruit wines and the Merridale Estate Cidery from Cobble Hill will provide cider tastings.

Throughout the cocktail reception, guests will be serenaded by Chilean-born guitar virtuoso Rodrigo Figueroa and his intimate mix of Latin and Blues-inspired melodies. Figueroa is often played on CBC radio and has performed at festivals throughout the Pacific Northwest with legends like Sting and Chick Corea.

Another festival highlight is the Alpine Fundraising Raffle. Beginning at the cocktail reception, guests will have a chance to meet Ann Kask, an award-winning fundraiser and marathon runner, as she teams up with renowned local fabric painter Pipi of *Pipi's Home Décor*. The duo will sell raffle tickets and cookbooks, with all proceeds going to Team Diabetes BC. For every raffle purchase, ticket holders will be entered to win the grand prize – an original linen tablecloth and eight-piece napkin set that Pipi will hand-paint during the festival.

As a festival sponsor, 'Beyond' The Kitchen Door will also attend the cocktail reception and showcase the bestselling cookbooks of Anthony Sedlak and local authors like Tahera Rawji, Maria Elena, Ann Kask and Eric Akis. The authors will be present to meet guests, sign books and discuss their favourite appetizers as they are served throughout the evening.

The 3rd Annual Mt. Washington Alpine Food Festival is presented by Mount Washington, Comox Valley Agrifood, 'Beyond' the Kitchen Door and The Comox Valley Record. Tickets can be purchased for individual events or as a package for the entire weekend. For more information and details on the many events, chefs, cooking seminars, The Grand Gala Dinner and the Alpine Marketplace, call 250-338-1386 or visit www.mountwashington.ca/foodfestival.