



California Giant Berry Farms Chef Invitational Entry Deadline One Month Away

(WATSONVILLE, CA – April 1, 2019) California Giant Berry Farms is just one month away from selecting their chef finalists on May 1, 2019 to compete in the 2nd annual Chef Invitational held at Tehama Golf Club in Monterey, CA.

This year, in addition to asking chefs to bring their very best berry-inspired entrées and desserts, the berry company has some fresh, new features they're adding to the event taking place June 25, 2019. The culinary competition and experience meant to strengthen relationships and cultivate new partnerships – this year, the Chef Invitational will present a *Foodie Forum* the morning of the event to unite foodservice partners, Chef finalists, California Giant Influencers, and special guests to share their industry experience and spark interactive conversation. This will serve as a deeper dive into fresh trends, berry trends and how California Giant can continue to build their brand and loyalty with this importance audience.

"We're really looking forward to the addition of the *Foodie Forum* this year," explains California Giant Berry Farms Director of Foodservice, Tom Smith. "Our blogger and brand ambassador Ashley from *Fit Mitten Kitchen* will bring a relatable, attainable approach to cooking, and can communicate hacks and at-home tips for the everyday consumer to be able to recreate the chef inspired recipes at home," Smith adds.

Restaurant owner of Carmel's Basil Seasonal Dining and Seaside's Gusto Handcrafted Pasta and Pizza, Denis Boaro, will also be returning to the 2nd annual event as a judge and forum speaker to share his industry experience and discuss partnership development. "The 1st annual Chef Invitational, served as an introduction to Denis' restaurant and his industry expertise which led to the opportunity to hit the ground running, and a joint partnership and friendship," says Smith. "Denis utilizes California Giant berries on new menu items and at events, incorporates them into creative, savory dishes, and mixes ingredients and flavors that accent our berries in ways consumers have never seen before. Denis' craft and innovation when it comes to flavor and berry utilization on the menu will surely spark creative



collaboration around the room.”

As the Chef Invitational competition commences, culinary tastings will be plentiful – with bites and samples hand-made by Chef finalists for attendees to observe and enjoy, in addition to the local sponsors showcasing and sampling berry-pairing offerings around the room. Guests can enjoy happy hour courtesy of returning local sponsors Odonata Wines and Alfaro Family Vineyard Wines, Lula’s Chocolates, California Giant mixed berries, a California Giant raspberry beer collaboration with Santa Cruz Mountain Brewery, and an array of cheeses and meats to pair for an afternoon of bites, beverages, and entertainment.

This year, Executive Chef, local radio and television personality and owner of Baker’s Bacon, Chef Tony Baker of Montrio Bistro will be emceeding the competition, and accompanying the group on field tours, the Foodie Forum, and hosting the Chef’s Welcome Dinner.

“I’m really excited to be partnering with California Giant and participating in this year’s Chef Invitational event from start to finish,” says Baker. “It’s a great way to collaborate, network and form new relationships and partnerships within the foodservice industry, and I look forward to spending a few days with the talented team of chef finalists.”

2018 Chef Invitational Top Chef Luis Reyes of Sysco West-Coast Florida will also be joining the group during the 3-day event and will present the award to the incoming 2019 Chef Invitational *Top Chef*.

Recipe submissions to compete in the 2nd annual California Giant Berry Farms Chef Invitational are due one month from today – May 1, 2019. Finalists will be announced May 10, 2019.

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