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**WINNER, WINNER, BLUEBERRY QUAIL DINNER**

*California Giant Berry Farms Announces 2nd Annual Chef Invitational Winner*

**WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA (JUNE 27, 2019)** – California Giant Berry Farms hosted their 2nd annual Chef Invitational culinary competition on June 25th at Tehama Golf Club in Monterey, CA and a panel of chef judges chose the winner at the end of a 3 day event ending with a chef cook-off.

The winner of the 2nd annual event is Chef Travis Peters, co-owner of the Parish Gastropub in Tucson, AZ and represented by Shamrock Foods & Markon. Chef Peters entered the competition with a dish that clearly impressed the 120 guests at the event and the panel of four chef judges. The judges panel, made up of chefs, influencers and local restaurateurs selected the winner based on criteria to use 2 of the 4 berries grown by California Giant, appearance, taste, flavor and creativity. Ultimately, Chef Travis Peters of The Parish in Tucson, AZ, representing Shamrock Foods, a Markon Cooperative Inc. member was selected as Top Chef for his Blueberry Sweet Tea Quail in Raspberry BBQ sauce, served over Blackberry and Blueberry Brussel Sprouts and garnished with Strawberry Infused Oil and Toasted Pecans.

All the dishes presented by the six chefs were incredibly innovative in their use of berries and delicious. Another key component to the event was the opportunity for the 120 guests to taste each of the six chef developed recipes and cast a vote for People's Choice Award. All the attendees enjoyed the chance to taste walk from station to station and taste each of the creative dishes loaded with a combination of California Giant berries. Five of the Chefs prepared

entrees including the Quail dish, a Berry Bomb Fish Taco, a blackberry harissa pork tenderloin with roasted strawberry beet salad, a berry halibut dish, blueberry mole chicken with berry habanero salsa and masa corn cake and one dessert that was a blackberry-blueberry filled korean street style mochi donut. While the Quail won the Top California Giant Chef Award, the People's Choice award went to Jonathon Merrick, Maines Paper & Foodservice/Markon for his delicious Korean style mochi donut. Several guests visited his table for more than one sample.

California Giant was pleased at the enthusiastic participation and attendance at this second annual event by their foodservice distributor partners supporting their chefs as they submitted recipes. Over the course of the 3-day event, chef finalists enjoyed field tours, berry tastings, wine pairings, a food trends forum and memorable meal events. The ultimate chef cook-off was the main event on the last day as each chef re-created their recipe entries for a panel of judges and guests at Tehama Golf Club in Monterey, CA.

The six finalists:

- Chef Israel Ortiz - Harrah's Resort/Fresh Concepts
- Chef Travis Peters - Shamrock Foodservice/Markon
- Chef Jonathon Merrick – Maines Paper & Food Service/Markon
- Chef Adrian Day-Murchison – Renaissance Food Group
- Chef Patty Long – Renaissance Food Group
- Chef Christian Kearns – Sysco

"This year was exceptional in caliber of recipes submitted and the way we enhanced the overall experience for our chef finalists". Says Tom Smith, Director of Foodservice for California Giant. "We used the feedback we received last year from the chef participants and spent more time in the field, talking with our farmers, and learning about the different berries we grow." Adds Smith, as he looks forward to feedback this year to make the 3rd annual even better.

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