

## **Bits & Bites.... from Food Lust 2006**

### ***Chefs, Farmers, Food-lovers rub elbows at first annual Food Lust benefit***

May 20, 2006, Fall City, WA – Surrounded by the fertile ground of Fall City Farms, area farmers, chefs and food lovers enjoyed the last rays of the setting sun and a starry night sky with farm-fresh food, live music and inspiring food tales at Food Lust 2006 – the first annual benefit for the Cascade Harvest Coalition.

The on-farm event was supported by many Western Washington farms and food-related businesses who donated the food, auction items and talent that made it a night to remember. The menu featured pairings of chefs and farmers who worked together to develop seasonal delights. Chef BJ Duft of Herban Feast Catering partnered with Willie Green's Organic Farm of Monroe to kick off the feasting with an appetizer course - a tempura of Northwest morels stuffed with chevre and chive blossoms and then a fresh spring salad of tender greens with fresh Port Madison chevre. These were enjoyed with a selection of local wines and beer.

Dinner commenced after a lively silent auction at which lucky and vigilant bidders won dinners at some of Seattle's hottest restaurants, Northwest-themed cookbooks, yards of compost and even flats of strawberry starts ready for planting. Chef-farmer pairings for dinner included:

- Flying Fish Restaurant teamed with the reefnetters Lummi Island Wild Salmon and Whistling Train Farm of Kent for a fish course of Grilled Wild Pink Salmon with Walla Walla Onions with Smoked Tomato Lentil Salad. Flying Fish also prepared Kumamoto Oysters with Shaved Cucumber Ice contributed by Taylor Shellfish.
- A meat lover's sampling was presented by Steve Smrstik of the 35<sup>th</sup> Street Bistro. With Lopez Island Farm sustainably-raised pork, he made Red Chile Stew. With beef from Skagit River Ranch of Sedro-Woolley, he prepared Jerk-spiced Beef Back Ribs and Bulgogi Korean Short Ribs.
- Kaspar Donier of Kaspar's Special Events and Catering partnered with Full Circle Farm of Carnation on Handmade Spaetzle flavored with lovage and fennel and accompanied by baby beets and turnips and fresh spring greens.

- Marty Bracken of Bon Appetit Management Company joined forces with Inaba Farms of Wapato for Seared Asparagus with Hazelnuts and Morels.

Each chef was on hand to serve diners and give them a chance to ask questions about ingredients and preparation.

Dinner was followed by keynote remarks from farmer-author-photographer Michael Ableman who shared his thoughts on the evening's theme – "Food Lust" and the importance of sharing that kind of excitement to attract new young farmers to the field. Diners heartily agreed that the "pleasure principle" at the heart of the evening's sumptuous feast was an effective tool for building awareness of the vital farm to table connection.

A cheese course was served featuring local artisan and farmstead cheeses from Port Madison, Beecher's, Golden Glen and Mount Townsend – reminding guests how much artistry and sense of place can be tasted in just a bite.

Luscious desserts donated by some of the area's top pastry chefs were auctioned off in a "Dessert Dash" with highest bidding tables getting to choose first. Earth & Ocean, Stumbling Goat, Lark, Yarrow Bay Grill, Essential Bakery, La Medusa, Le Pichet, Stimson Green Mansion and Flying Fish contributed delectable delights ranging from sinful chocolate cakes to rhubarb upside down cake and Meyer lemon tarts.

Farmer Wade Bennett of Rockridge Farms in Enumclaw served as auctioneer at the live auction getting top dollar for some very special items – a day in the test kitchen with cookbook author Cynthia Nims, a whole lamb from Ninety Farms in Arlington, a chef-prepared lamb dinner for ten at Lopez Island Farm to name a few.

The proceeds from the evening will benefit the Cascade Harvest Coalition, a nonprofit working to build a sustainable regional food system in Puget Sound. The Coalition's programs range from Puget Sound Fresh, a branding and marketing program for locally produced foods, to FarmLink, a program linking new farmers with retiring farmers who want their land to stay in farming, to NW Harvest for Humanity, which trades volunteer labor to farms during the harvest in exchange for donations of fresh produce to area food banks.

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