

On Monday, August 15th, Peltzer Winery will host and present Oak Grove Center's 15th Annual So-Cal Chef Open. The event has grown in popularity and reputation, with several past Chefs having been featured in lifestyle magazines, on television, as well as receiving coverage from influential food critics and bloggers. Past winners include Chef Rosie O'Connor, owner of Provecho Grill. Rosie has appeared on multiple television commercials and shows, including Food Network's *Supermarket Stakeout* and the Cooking Channel's *Farmer's Market Flip*.

Showcasing their culinary expertise, Chefs compete for two awards: The Pinnacle Award and People's Choice. The Pinnacle Award is voted on through a blind tasting scoring system by culinary experts: Celebrity Chef Judges, Food Critics, and Influencers. This year's featured celebrity judges will be Chefs Rosie O'Connor, Temecula's own Leah Di Bernardo, and owner of Wahoo's Fish Taco, Wing Lam. Rosie is the Executive chef and Owner of Provecho Grill and appeared on Food Network's *Supermarket Stakeout*, as well as the Cooking Channel's *Farmer's Market*. An award-winning chef, restaurateur, and businessowner, Leah is the founding partner of Extraordinary Artisan Table, a Temecula, California restaurant famous for its organic, locally grown ingredients. She is frequently mentioned and highlighted in such publications as *Sunset Magazine*, *Featured-Wine Enthusiast*, KTLA 5 Morning News, *Huffington Post*, and numerous international and national blogs. Joining these great local chefs is Wing Lam, Restaurateur, speaker, philanthropist, and surfer. Wing serves as CEO of Wahoo's Fish Taco and co-founded the global franchise brand in 1988 with his brothers. Former television host of *Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*, current radio host of KFI 640's, *The Fork Report*, and self-proclaimed "Food Geek," Neil Saavedra will round out this impressive judging pane. The People's Choice Top Chef is determined by event patrons casting their vote that evening. The event features both award presentations.

Competing for the first time this year is Chef Mario Amaral, representing Savage Chef Bar & Grill. Chef Mario, a graduate of Le Cordon Bleu Culinary Arts College, has cooked at Olives inside the AAA Five Diamond Bellagio hotel, opened *Cake Boss* star Buddy Valastro's restaurant Buddy V's inside The Venetian hotel, and worked for Wolfgang Puck at his flagship restaurant Spago inside the Caesars Palace hotel. In addition to the many restaurant openings and television appearances Chef Mario has made with Chef Todd English, he has also won many culinary competitions, including round 1 of Iron Chef Bellagio, BOH Brawl and the Las Vegas DICED competition.

Henry DiCarlo, an AMS meteorologist, and sportscaster for the KTLA 5 Morning News will be this year's Master of Ceremonies. In addition to Chef Mario, two-time winner Executive Chef Matthew Steffen with Cork Fire Kitchen, 2020 People's Choice Top Chef Winner Chef Armando Cota from Avensole Winery and many other award-winning chefs will vie for this year's Pinnacle Award and bragging rights. Many of the Chefs competing have extensive culinary experience training under Celebrity Chefs such as Wolfgang Puck. If you are a Foodie, this is a must-attend event.

On the following Friday, August 19th, the 20th Annual Oak Grove Center's Golf Classic will take place at Temecula Creek Inn Golf Course. Along with the So-Cal Chef Open, the Golf Classic supports Oak Grove Center's Culinary Arts Vocational Program. The real winners of these two events are Oak Grove Center's at-risk and special needs youth. The Culinary Arts Vocation Program provides experience and employable skills to help them transition into independent adulthood, successfully.

Tickets are \$40 per person online, <https://oakgrovecenter.org/events/chefopen/> or \$55 at the door, space permitting. The event attracts over 350 patrons and is expected to sell out early. Ticket holders enjoy tapas-style tastings from competing Chefs, wine, beer, and music in the beautiful outdoor, rural, Peltzer Winery grounds.

Golf Classic packages, including sponsorships and foursomes are also available at <https://oakgrovecenter.org/events/golf/>. So-Cal Chef Open tickets are included in the golf packages. Donations to help Oak Grove's Culinary Vocational Program can be made [online](#).