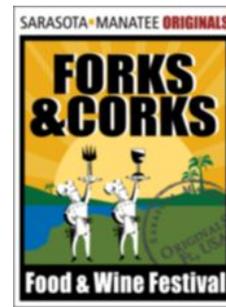


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2019 Forks & Corks Tickets Go On Sale November 5 *Grand Tasting, Forks & Corks University Tickets Expected to Sell Out Fast*

SARASOTA, Fla. (October 23, 2018) ☐ On Monday, Nov. 5, at 7:00 p.m., tickets will go on sale for the popular Grand Tasting event of the highly anticipated **2019 Forks & Corks Food & Wine Festival** (Jan. 25-27, 2019), presented by the Sarasota-Manatee Originals. Tickets will also be available for the festival's Forks & Corks University Master Class, a series of fun and educational seminars led by wine experts from around the world. All ticket sales will take place online at EatLikeALocal.com. Now in its 12th season, the multi-day Forks & Corks epicurean event is well established as the area's premier food and wine festival.

☐ We're once again assembling a stellar group of international winery owners and winemakers to showcase alongside our own outstanding collection of culinary masters from the more than 50 local restaurants that make up the Sarasota-Manatee Originals,☐ said Sarah Firstenberger, executive director of the organization. ☐ There are many great events throughout the festival and we are thrilled with the popularity of the Grand Tasting as tickets sell out in a matter of minutes each year.☐

For the Grand Tasting, guests will be able to purchase up to four (4) General Admission tickets (\$150.00 each) or up to two (2) VIP tickets (\$350.00 each) online. VIP tickets include a \$150 wine voucher, valet parking, early front courtyard entrance for a champagne reception, as well as covered seating and a personal invitation to the VIP festival kick-off party (January 24, 2019). There are also sponsorship opportunities available, which include tickets to the Grand Tasting event. For information on sponsorships, contact Sarah Firstenberger at (941) 365-2800 or sarah@dineoriginal.com.

The Grand Tasting will take place on Sunday, Jan. 27, 2019, from noon to 4 p.m. in the expansive courtyard and greenspace of the world-renowned John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota. According to Firstenberger, the Grand Tasting of 2019 promises to be the best yet, with a number of new Originals serving specialties alongside their fellow Original restaurateurs. Guests will savor culinary creations from members of the Sarasota-Manatee Originals ☐ and sip from a collection of more than 350 wines from across the globe ☐ all hand-selected and professionally tasted, judged and recognized as medal winners. A retail tent will also be available, where patrons can purchase the various wines, making Forks & Corks one of only a few festivals in the Southeast to provide the opportunity to purchase wines showcased on-site during the event.

Those who enroll in a Forks & Corks University Master Class enjoy tasting and learning about various wines in seminars led by a panel of winemakers and owners from the showcased wineries. Each half- or full-day session includes a gourmet four-course meal with wine pairings. Sessions take place at Michael's on East Ballroom and Wine Cellar, and tickets (on sale Nov. 5) are required to attend. The full class schedule will be available at EatLikeALocal.com in December.

In addition to the Grand Tasting and University events, Forks & Corks includes more than 25 tasting experiences, including winemaker dinners, retail tastings and an industry only trade tasting, each featuring top-of-class wines, celebrity winemakers, and cuisine from more than 50 of the finest independently owned local restaurants on Florida's SunCoast. Tickets for all these events, along with special packages and accommodation offers, will be available in December.

Keeping it local, Forks & Corks supports The Ringling Foundation as well as All Faiths Food Bank, and has raised over \$500,000 to benefit these local non-profit organizations over the last decade.

An area-wide event, this year's sponsors include Suncoast Porsche and Audi Sarasota (Presenting Sponsor), Willis Smith Construction, Art Ovation Hotel, CenterState Bank, Palmer Accounting Group, P.A., Atlas Insurance, Design Works, and Icard Merrill.

For more information on Forks & Corks and to purchase tickets, visit EatLikeALocal.com. Follow Forks & Corks on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/forksandcorks) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/forksandcorks).

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About Sarasota-Manatee Originals

The Sarasota-Manatee Originals are a diverse collection of more than 50 award-winning, independent restaurants with a shared passion for outstanding dining experiences and commitment to the community. Each Original restaurant is known for its inventive use of the best ingredients to prepare dishes that embody the flavor, color and culture of Florida's west coast. Forks & Corks is the organization's major annual fundraiser.