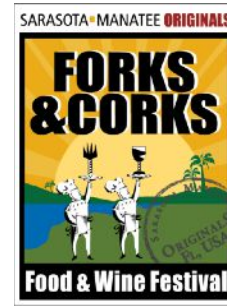


Media Contact:
Hayworth Public Relations
Maria Hayworth
(386) 677-7000/maria@hayworthpr.com
Nori Rodriguez
(813) 639-8035/nori@hayworthpr.com



YEAR 2018

Forks & Corks - A Palate-Pleasing Event

Overview

The Sarasota-Manatee Originals will host its 11th annual food and wine festival, Forks & Corks, Jan. 26-28, 2018. This premier food and wine extravaganza features top-of-class wines, celebrity winemakers, and cuisine from 60 of the finest independently owned local restaurants on the SunCoast. Forks & Corks includes more than 25 tasting experiences, including winemaker dinners, retail tastings, a trade tasting, educational sessions, and the Grand Tasting event.

The Forks & Corks "Top of the Class" wine competition takes place on Nov. 27, 2017 with 16 experts judging nearly 300 wines competing for Best of Show, Gold, Silver and Bronze medal honors. The winning wines will be among the more than 350 featured during the Forks & Corks events in January 2018.

The Originals

The Sarasota-Manatee Originals are a diverse collection of 60 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.

Grand Tasting

A perennial instant sell-out, the Grand Tasting (Jan. 28, 2018) takes place within the expansive courtyard and greenspace of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota. Attendees 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 - and savor culinary creations from members of the Sarasota-Manatee Originals. A retail tent is also available, where patrons can purchase various varietals, making Forks & Corks one of only a few festivals in the Southeast to provide the opportunity to purchase the showcased wines on-site during the event.

General and VIP admission are available, with VIP guests receiving a \$150 wine voucher, designated valet parking, early entrance and a champagne reception, as well as covered seating, a private tour of The Ringling Museum and attendance to the event kick-off party on Jan. 25, 2018.

- Winemaker Dinners** These ticketed affairs showcase some of the medal-winning wines with perfectly paired menus at select Originals establishments. Led by some of the world's greatest wine purveyors, these intimate and inspiring dinners provide a rare experience for devoted foodies and wine enthusiasts. Winemaker Dinners take place Jan. 25-27, 2018.
- Forks & Corks U** Forks & Corks University is a series of fun and educational seminars led by wine experts from around the world. In half- or full-day sessions, attendees taste and learn about various wines from the showcased wineries, and enjoy a gourmet four-course lunch with wine pairings. Tickets, which may purchased starting Nov. 6, 2017 at 7:00pm, are required to attend the Jan. 27, 2018 sessions. The sessions take place at Michael's on East Ballroom and Wine Cellar.
- Retail Tastings** From Jan. 26-27, the community is peppered with a number of "pop-up" retail tasting tents hosted by some of the area's leading local wine merchants. These events range from more intimate get-togethers to large gatherings. For a complete list of Retail Tastings, visit www.eatlikealocal.com/forksandcorks.
- Charity** Keeping it local, The Originals support The Ringling Foundation and All Faiths Food Bank and other local non-profits. To date, Forks & Corks has raised nearly \$500,000 to benefit local charities.
- Accommodations** Official hotel partners are offering special rates for Forks & Corks 2018, starting at just \$125 per night.
- The 2018 Forks & Corks official hotel partners include: Aloft Sarasota, Hotel Indigo, Hyatt Regency Sarasota, Lido Beach Resort, The Resort at Longboat Key Club, The Ritz-Carlton, Sarasota, and The Westin Sarasota.
- For more information on these special packages being offered, please go to www.eatlikealocal.com/forksandcorks.
- Presenting Sponsors** Forks & Corks is made possible - and phenomenal - thanks to the support of our Presenting Sponsors Suncoast Porsche and Audi Sarasota.
- Additional sponsors:** Icard Merrill, Design Works, Atlas Insurance, Willis Smith Construction, Sweet Sparkman Architects, and Palmer Accounting Group.
- Tickets** Tickets for the Grand Tasting and Forks & Corks University go on sale Nov. 6, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. Tickets may only be purchased at www.eatlikealocal.com Reservations for other events may be made starting December 2017.
(941) 365-2800 / www.eatlikealocal.com

#