

Celebrity Chefs & Event Line Up Announced for 2016 St. Croix Food & Wine Experience

Tickets on Sale for Star Studded Benefit Featuring Acclaimed Chefs Robyn Almovodar, Sam Choy, William Desimone, Negust Kaza, Javier Nassar, and Digby Stidiron

St. Croix, US Virgin Islands - March 2016 – The St. Croix Foundation for Community Development announces the event lineup for the 2016 [St. Croix Food & Wine Experience](#), a culinary, wine and spirits festival held on the island of St. Croix in the US Virgin Islands, from Thursday, April 7th through Tuesday, April 12. The weekend event series will consist of an impressive roster of guest chefs including well-known TV personalities, cookbook authors, James Beard winners and corporate chefs. Guest chefs will participate in multiple events during the culinary series, working alongside students from the Career and Technical Education Center culinary program and St. Croix Central High School Cooking Class as well as with local chefs. Through a deepening partnership with the Department of Tourism, the event also brings to the Territory a variety of travel writers, bloggers and media representatives, expanding St. Croix's national and international exposure as a culinary and tourism destination.

Funds raised from the *St. Croix Food and Wine Experience* support the St. Croix Foundation for Community Development and enables the Foundation to continue its high impact work in the areas of workforce development, public safety, public education, and economic development.

According to St. Croix Foundation Executive Director, Deanna James, "Beyond being a fundraiser for the Foundation, the *Food and Wine Experience* is also, at the core, an opportunity to engage all the stakeholders that make our work meaningful, from national partners and donors to local community members - and most of all our young people. "Named one of the top 10 international food and wine events by Forbestravel.com, the series features St. Croix's culinary talent, wine purveyors, rum distilleries affords guests a unique opportunity to EXPERIENCE all that's special about St. Croix," James continued.

The line-up of guest chefs for the 2016 St. Croix Food & Wine Experience includes:

- **Robyn Almovodar** – Executive Chef and owner of award winning Palate Party, Almovodar is a former winner of Food Network's CHOPPED and Cut Throat Kitchen
- **Sam Choy** – Author, James Beard winner, restaurateur, Iron Chef winner, TV personality, and "Godfather of Poke," Sam Choy is *the* ambassador for breadfruit and Hawaiian cuisine
- **Billy Desimone** - Executive Chef and Founder of the Giving the Dream Foundation, created in memory of Desimone's brother and Facebook's Executive Chef the late Josef Desimone
- **Negust Kaza** – Owner of Kaza House and award winning member of the Virgin Islands Olympic Culinary Team
- **Ralph Motto** – local Crucian Son, now based out of New York and named Black Enterprise's Modern Man of 2015
- **Javier Nassar** - International and celebrity chef, Owner and Executive Chef of A la Care Catering Company and Tras-patio Bistro, this Puerto Rican based chef has catered for Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck

- **Digby Stridiron** – Executive Chef and Owner of Balter restaurant, also named as Culinary Ambassador of the US Virgin Islands and the 2014-2015 Caribbean Chef of the Year

Guest chefs of the St. Croix Food & Wine Experience participate in events that range from relaxed to elegant options for foodies. Guest wine makers, spirit companies and breweries are paired with each event. The 2016 schedule of events is:

- **Thursday, April 7 – *bond @ balter*** – pre-event reception held at balter restaurant, combining outstanding cocktails with appetizers from Chef and Owner Digby Stridiron
- **Friday, April 8**
 - ***Sunset BBQ on the Frederiksted Pier*** - this affordable, Crucian BBQ features mouth-watering delicacies and boasts a local line-up of Chefs Billy Desimone, Negust Kaza, Ralph Motta, and Digby Stridiron, with Chef Doos with the culinary students from the St. Croix Educational Complex and Central High School
 - ***Cork & Fork Dinners*** - intimate dinners at private homes featuring Chefs Sam Choy and Robyn Almovodar
- **Saturday, April 9 - *Wine in the Warehouse*** - celebrating the Roaring 20s and held at Leeward Islands Warehouse, this event features wines from Bellows International, Prestige Wine Group and West Indies Company for fine wine aficionados
- **Sunday, April 10 - *Cuisine on the Green*** - held at Carambola Golf Course, providing treats at select tees for golfers and nongolfers in this spirited tournament
- **Tuesday, April 12 - *Gourmet Vintner Dinner*** - an "All Silver Jubilee" in honor of the Foundation's 25th Anniversary; hosted by Ha'Penny Bay Beach and featuring Chef Javier Nassar with wines from Glazer's Premier Distributors

**For information about A Taste of St. Croix at the Divi Carina Bay Resort, guests can visit www.tasteofstcroix.com.*

“Despite St. Croix’s struggling economy and declining population, the Foundation is grateful to all the organizations and individuals that have continued to sponsor the event and to the guests who return each year to make this the preeminent food and wine event in the Caribbean,” James stated. “Even more consequential this year is the fact that the Foundation is directly linking the sponsors of the event to its comprehensive and ambitious Community Development Agenda which entails supporting the installation of security cameras, expanding a NCCER Workforce Development Initiative for unemployed youth, expanding a homeless initiative to provide shelter and medical care for our Community’s indigent population.

Every sponsorship dollar raised is leveraged many times over and reinvested into the Community to support the Foundation’s broad-based, Territory-wide mission of social and economic transformation,” James concluded.

The 2016 *St. Croix Food & Wine Experience* is made possible by countless chefs, volunteers, corporate citizens, and loyal attendees. The Foundation thanks the *Experience's* Platinum Sponsor the Virgin Islands Department of Tourism, Diamond Sponsor Glazer's Premier Distributors, Gold Sponsors, Crucian Point, Douglas and Jeannine Schrock, Casino Control Commission, and Leeward Islands Warehouse, as well as valued Sponsors TEAM Consultants, balter restaurant, the Buccaneer, Cape Air, Cruzan Rum, First Bank, St. Croix Tourism, Prestige Wine Group, Bellows International, West Indies Company, Banco Popular, Seaborne, Marshall & Sterling, Renaissance Carambola Beach Resort & Spa, Arawak Bay, Events by Nichole, ibDesigns, Centerline, Diageo, and Tropical Shipping.

For information about, tickets, events, and sponsorship visit <http://www.stxfoodandwine.com> or call Deanna James at the Foundation at 340-773-9898.