

For Immediate Release

Celebrating the delights of both swine and vine at 2011 *Taste* festival

July 13, 2011, Victoria, B.C. – As the city counts down to the third-annual Taste: Victoria's Festival of Food and Wine, culinary enthusiasts are busily poring over the schedule, aiming to fit in as many events as possible over the one delicious weekend.

"From July 21 to 24, Taste will bring the city's food and wine communities together to celebrate British Columbia's local winemakers, chefs, artisan producers, farmers and fishers," said Kathy McAree, Taste's organizer. "We're selective about who we partner with during Taste, and that means that we can stand behind the outstanding quality, the passion and most of all, the amazing flavours that festival-goers will experience at all of the events."

For the third year, McAree is working with the Hotel Grand Pacific on the popular "Swine and the Vine" event, held on the hotel's harbourfront patio in front of The Pacific Restaurant on Saturday, July 23 from 2:00pm – 4:30pm. Guests are encouraged to grab a plate and a glass before tasting and sipping their way through barbecue fare and complementary wines, teas, and ciders from throughout British Columbia.

"The star of the show this year will be a whole spit-roasted wild boar from Two Rivers Specialty Meats," said Janis Goard, the Hotel Grand Pacific's director of Food & Beverage. "We came up with the idea of Swine and the Vine after one of our winemaker's dinners at The Pacific. We thought that it would be great to have a laidback alternative where the food and wine are serious, but the atmosphere is decidedly un-serious!"

Along with the spit-roasted boar, the Swine and the Vine also features house-made hams, charcuterie, pancetta, sausages and pâtés using Sloping Hill Farms pork – items that Goard jokingly refers to as "tasty little piggy bits!" The hotel's east-meets-west feel is reflected in offerings such as the house-made Thai sausage, and the ever popular barbecue pork buns that also feature on the restaurant's weekend dim sum menu. Executive Chef Rick Choy and Executive Sous Chef Ian Goard will prepare barbecue favourites such as ribs and pulled pork, along with crowd-pleasing sides dishes that make use of the very freshest and best local ingredients currently in season.

Along with the "swine," guests will enjoy a range of drinks, and not just limited to the "vine" either! Along with B.C. wineries such as Averill Creek, Rocky Creek, Blasted Church and Venutri Schulze, guests can sample Silk Road's refreshing iced tea, Sea Cider, and Tugwell Creek Mead.

An event such as this is to be expected from the Hotel Grand Pacific – an establishment places a focus on putting guests at ease, but takes its food and wine very seriously. Over 40 of the hotel's food and beverage staff have completed at least the first stage towards International Sommelier Guild certification, and Silk Road's Tea Master Daniela Cubelic is regularly involved in training staff on appropriate tea service techniques and cultural significance. Where possible, ingredients are sourced locally, all seafood is Ocean Wise, and products are made in-house.

Tickets for Swine and the Vine are \$69 each and can be purchased by visiting www.VictoriaTaste.com or by stopping by the front desk at the Hotel Grand Pacific.

For more information and to read about the festival's full roster of events, visit www.VictoriaTaste.com.

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Third-annual wine and food fest gears up to celebrate BC's flavours

May 10, 2011, Victoria, BC – Local culinary aficionado Kathy McAree is cooking up a whole lot of good things these days as she prepares to launch the third-annual *Taste: Victoria's Festival of Food and Wine*, a gastronomical event set to take place July 21 - 24, 2011 in Victoria, BC.

Focusing on Vancouver Island cuisine and British Columbia wines, the festival is supported by a number of local winemakers, chefs, artisan producers, farmers and fishers – all key players in helping to make Vancouver Island a vibrant culinary destination.

“When choosing partners for *Taste*, I look at a number of factors to ensure they're really walking the talk, so to speak,” said McAree, founder of *Taste* and Vancouver Island's premier culinary tourism operator. “I look at how local and seasonal ingredients are showcased in their products, their contribution to our community which contributes to our local economy. *Taste* is also unique in that, rather than just being one day, it offers four great days of serious food and wine indulgence!”

The *Taste* weekend kicks off on Thursday, July 21 at Victoria's Crystal Garden with The Main Event: an evening brimming with more than 100 BC wines and great Vancouver Island eats. Guests will be joined by local chefs, wine producers and the live music of Greenlaw, a local band with a unique blend of dub, soul, jazz, drum and bass-infused rhythms.

Other special events taking place July 22 to 24 include the wine and seafood extravaganza Sips and Seafood hosted by the Inn at Laurel Point and chef Takashi Ito, a Silk Road tea tasting with Tea Master Daniela Cubelic, a Swine and The Vine pig roast on the Hotel Grand Pacific patio, a three-course brunch at Vista 18 and a unique wine seminar of Vancouver Island vs. the World.

And new to this year's multi-day line-up is Land and Sea Harvest on the Family Farm: a dining adventure to take place in the middle of the field at the Vantreight Family Farm, overlooking the Saanich Peninsula and ocean. Join Ryan Vantreight and chef Matt Risling from The Marina Restaurant for “zero mile diet” cuisine, paired with wines from BC's Mission Hill Family Estate Winery.

Tickets to *Taste* are set to go on sale May 13, 2011. For more information on the events and purchase information, visit www.victoriataste.com.

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For Immediate Release

It'll be a seafood celebration and more at the 2011 *Taste* festival

June 21, 2011, Victoria, BC – With just one month to go until the third-annual *Taste: Victoria's Festival of Food and Wine*, things are heating up for the event's organizer, Kathy McAree.

"*Taste*, from July 21 - 24, is all about celebrating flavours and ingredients from our British Columbia backyard – both land and sea," said McAree. "Imagine being served organic tea by a Tea Master or dining in the middle of a field at a local family farm – the experiences at *Taste* are just as special as our culinary landscape."

And with Vancouver Island known around the world for its bountiful seafood, this is the third year that McAree has collaborated with Inn at Laurel Point and Finest at Sea to devote an entire evening to celebrating local fishers and ocean delicacies. *Sips and Seafood*, held on the hotel's stunning seaside terrace amongst hand-tended Japanese gardens, will take place on July 22, from 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

"This is truly our flagship culinary event of the year," said Avril Matthews, director of sales and marketing at Inn at Laurel Point. "Show up in your jeans and pearls and fill up your plate – and wineglass – at a number of seafood and beverage stations. And with our Kiss the Crab photo op and getting up close and personal with our culinary team, this is an evening not to be missed."

One of the event's biggest supporters, Finest at Sea, a commercial fishing business based in James Bay, Victoria, is set to supply *Sips and Seafood* with a range of delicious seafood products. Prepared by Inn at Laurel Point executive chef Takashi Ito and executive sous chef Patrick Gayler, some of the ocean treats showcased at the event include smoked salmon, tuna, fresh oysters, crab, scallops, hand-peeled shrimp, mussels and more.

Bob Fraumeni, owner of Finest at Sea, has been an advocate for sustainable fisheries since the '70s and his business is Canada's only provider of 100 per cent known-origin sustainable seafood.

"Our seafood products are the only of its kind in Canada where my staff can tell you when and where any particular seafood was caught – I can even pinpoint which exact vessel was used," said Fraumeni.

And when it comes to beverages, *Sips and Seafood* has a number of partners in place to ensure guests' wineglasses (or teacups) never run dry. The event will showcase wines by Nichol, Serendipity Winery, Therapy Vineyards, Hillside Estate Winery, Red Rooster Winery and Averill Creek Vineyards; beers by Phillips Beer; organic teas by Silk Road; and gin by Victoria Spirits.

"This is the first year *Sips and Seafood* has almost exclusively focused on wines from the Naramata Bench in BC's Okanagan, a region known for producing excellent wines," said McAree.

Tickets for *Sips and Seafood* are \$99 each and can be purchased by visiting www.VictoriaTaste.com or by stopping by the front desk at Inn at Laurel Point.

For more information on *Taste* and to read about the festival's full roster of events, visit www.VictoriaTaste.com.

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Backgrounder

Can you Taste it?

July 21 - 24, 2011 marks the third-annual *Taste: Victoria's Festival of Food and Wine* – a popular event that celebrates Vancouver Island cuisine and British Columbian wines. The festival, known for its culinary consciousness and integrity, kicks off on Thursday, July 21 with The Main Event, a local tasting and grazing evening, and follows with three days of gastronomic indulgence. Some highlights include *Sips and Seafood* at Inn at Laurel Point, *Swine and the Vine* at Hotel Grand Pacific and *Band, Bubbles and Bennys* at Chateau Victoria's Vista 18. *Taste* is supported by a number of local winemakers, chefs, artisan producers, farmers and fishers – all key players in helping to make Vancouver Island a vibrant culinary destination. All proceeds from the event will go to The Land Conservancy, an organization with a strong future vision of the region's food scene.

About Kathy McAree

Taste is the brainchild of local Victoria gal Kathy McAree. As a culinary tour operator, facilitator, writer and speaker, Kathy has blazed culinary trails around the globe, is proud to call Victoria home and loves to share stories about this region's rich culinary offerings. Kathy is a board advisor of the International Culinary Tourism Association and her industry knowledge, skill and passion is evident in her hour-long radio show, "In Good Taste" (Saturdays on CFX 1070). For the past three years, Kathy has worked tirelessly to ensure *Taste* maintains its spot as Victoria's top culinary and wine event.

Taste event lineup

Trade Tasting

July 21, 1:30 - 4 p.m. at Crystal Garden

Open to approved members of the food and beverage industry, this tasting event showcases our province's wines, spirits and ciders. Admission is by donation (suggested \$10) and all proceeds go to *Taste* beneficiary, The Land Conservancy. Winners of *Taste's* Sommelier of the Year and Wine List Awards will be announced.

The Main Event

July 21, 6:30 - 9 p.m. at Crystal Garden

Throughout this indulgent evening, sample BC wines (more than 100 will be available for tasting) and nibble on an incredible array of local and seasonal cuisine, as prepared by top local chefs. Vancouver Island farmers, suppliers and cheesemakers will also be on-hand to answer questions and chat about the benefits of eating local, organic and seasonal. Tickets are \$79 plus tax – purchase by visiting www.VictoriaTaste.com. (Tickets are expected to sell out in advance therefore will not be sold at the door).

Tea Tasting 101

July 22, 11 a.m. - noon at Silk Road

Go on a tea journey with Daniela Cubelic, Tea Master. Sample an exquisite selection of organic teas and learn about the intricate art of tasting through leaf appearance, aroma, colour and more. More sophisticated than a wine tasting? You be the judge. Tickets are \$10 – purchase by visiting www.VictoriaTaste.com.

Sips and Seafood

July 22, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. at Inn at Laurel Point

Feast on local, sustainable seafood (prepared by Executive Chef Takashi Ito and his culinary team and supplied by Finest at Sea) and taste an array of BC wines, beer, spirits and tea while wandering through the hand-tended Japanese garden at the Inn at Laurel Point. Tickets are \$99 – purchase by visiting www.VictoriaTaste.com or at the hotel's front desk.

Sustainable Seafood

July 23, 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at Finest at Sea

Join Bob Fraumeni, fisherman and owner of Finest at Sea (Canada's only 100 per cent supplier of known-origin and sustainable seafood) for an informational session at his James Bay plant. Tickets are \$15 – purchase by visiting www.VictoriaTaste.com.

Swine and the Vine

July 23, 2 - 4:30 p.m. at Hotel Grand Pacific

This event rolls in all the pig-related goodies you can eat with a selection of BC wines, teas, ciders and other local delectable treats. A highlight of the afternoon will be a patio-roasted whole suckling pig, presented by Executive Chef Rick Choy and his culinary team. Tickets are \$69 – purchase by visiting www.VictoriaTaste.com or at the hotel's front desk.

Vancouver Island vs. the World

July 23, 4 - 5:45 p.m. at Hotel Grand Pacific

Find out how our local wines match up to other well-known, international brands in a blind comparative tasting led by Sommelier and International Sommelier Guild instructor Pamela Sanderson and special guest John Schreiner, author and wine writer. You will taste your way around the world and back to our island with key varietals. Whether you're a novice or expert, you're bound to learn a thing or two at this hands-on event. Tickets are \$39 – purchase by visiting www.VictoriaTaste.com.

Band, Bubbles and Bennys

July 24, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Vista 18, Chateau Victoria

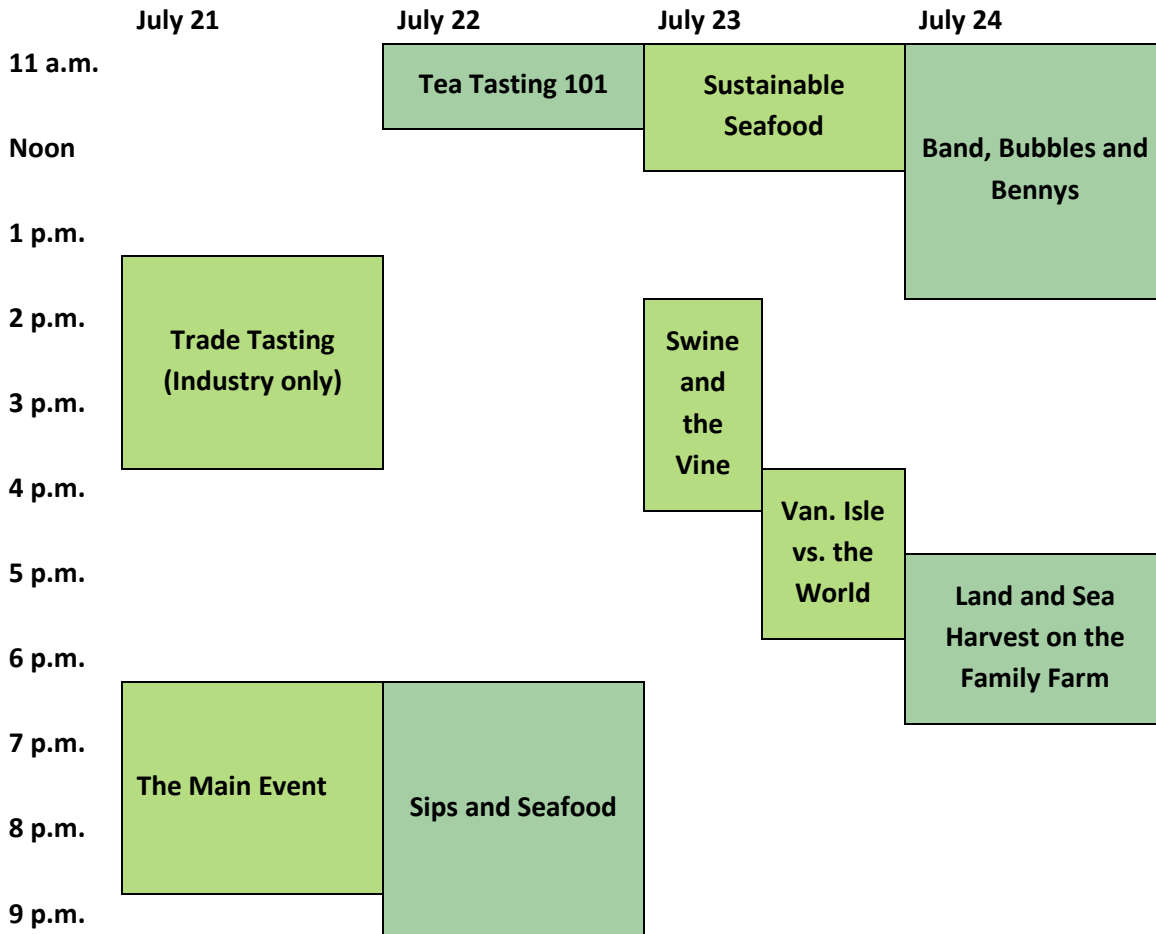
Listen to the jazzy sounds of Lust Life while sipping on BC sparkling wines and enjoying a delicious three-course brunch featuring Eggs Benedict and fabulous city vistas. Executive Chef Garrett Schack has created a tantalizing menu to pair perfectly with the celebratory flavours of local wineries. Tickets are \$45 – purchase by calling 250-361-5692.

Land and Sea Harvest on the Family Farm

July 24, 5 - 7 p.m. at Vantreight Farm

Join the crew from the Marina Restaurant for a family-style, al fresco summer dinner set in the field at Vantreight Farms. Take a tour of the working greenhouse before your al fresco meal featuring the mid-summer harvest, delicacies from the surrounding sea and Mission Hill Family Estate wines. Tickets are \$89 – purchase by visiting www.VictoriaTaste.com.

Taste Timetable



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