



**SOUTH WALTON BEACHES
WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL**

Chef Emeril Lagasse and Cristina Mariani-May among Celebrities Preparing for South Walton Beaches Wine and Food Festival

Renowned winemakers and award-winning chef to present at festival

Miramar Beach, Fla., (April 22, 2014) – The stars of the wine and culinary worlds will descend upon South Walton, Florida this week as Cristina Mariani-May and dozens of major winemakers, along with one of the world’s most prolific chefs, Emeril Lagasse, gear up to participate in the South Walton Beaches Wine and Food Festival April 24-27. This four-day extravaganza features more than 800 wines, an extensive culinary village, wine dinners, tasting seminars, a craft beer and spirits event and live entertainment over four days.

“This is the most impressive gathering of world-class winemakers we’ve ever had and the participation of Emeril Lagasse, Cristina Mariani-May, and the other major wine celebrities, make this festival the most exciting I’ve ever been associated with,” said Festival Organizer Chan Cox of Wine World.

Mariani-May, Family Proprietor and Co-CEO of Castello Banfi Vintners, will be featured alongside other nationally and internationally recognized wine personalities and industry experts, including Anthony Hamilton Russell, owner of Hamilton Russell Vineyards, Fran Kysela of Kysela Pere et Fils, LTD – *Wine Enthusiast Magazine’s* Importer of the Year; Gianni Abate of Morgan Winery; Michael Adelsheim of Adelsheim Vineyard and many others.

The wine makers will participate in events throughout the weekend including a VIP Tasting, the Grand Tastings and bottle signings.

Tasting Seminars will be held at both Grand Tastings on Saturday and Sunday from 1 p.m – 5 p.m. Lagasse, Mariani-May, Hamilton-Russell and Kysela are among the celebrities presenting seminars.

Lagasse, the 2013 James Beard Foundation Humanitarian of the Year, will sit down for a fun, informal interview with wine and media celebrity Cristina Mariani-May, CEO of Banfi Vintners with introductions from *Wine Enthusiast Magazine*. The audience will be able to ask questions of the chef and, in the spirit of this charity festival, no topics are off limits.

On the music side, The Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association (FRLA) is bringing Nashville’s top songwriters to the South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival. The songwriters will perform as a continuation of the *Endless Summer Music Series* in conjunction with BMI, a leader in music rights management. Throughout the weekend, the songwriters will perform and tell stories about their biggest hits written for the stars of the music business, including Tim McGraw, George Strait, Jason Aldean and many others.

The festival is being presented by Visit South Walton Tourist Development Council and *Wine Enthusiast Magazine*. Wyndham Vacation Rentals is the Official Lodging Partner for the festival. For a full schedule of events and tickets, go to www.sowalwine.com.

About South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival

South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival is an annual charity event held the last weekend of April. The festival features a stunning showcase of the best wines the world has to offer. Celebrity wine producers and chefs present fine wine and food pairings from the world's most famous appellations. The Savor South Walton Culinary Village offers a sumptuous array of foods to taste, wines to pair, as well as wine and food seminars, cooking demonstrations and live entertainment. The event is a major fundraiser for Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation, which benefits children in need in Northwest Florida. For more information, including a list of attending winemakers and to purchase tickets, visit www.SoWalWine.com.



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