

Fourth Annual South Beach Wine & Food Festival Raises An Estimated \$800,000 For Fiu School Of Hospitality & Tourism Management

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The 2005 South Beach Wine & Food Festival, presented by Food & Wine magazine, entertained more than 23,000 people February 25-27 and raised approximately \$800,000 in educational support of tomorrow's young industry leaders.

Over 100 international celebrity chefs, food personalities and world-renowned winemakers and experts wowed patrons for three straight days serving up the best in the wine and food world against the backdrop of South Beach's famed sand, surf and sun.

The American Airlines Live Auction and the Silent Auction at the BubbleQ combined to raise over \$250,000 with items such as artwork from Romero Britto, a KitchenAid Dream Kitchen, a trip to France with a VIP tour and tasting at Champagne Pommery estate, a trip to Chile with a VIP tour and tasting at Vina San Pedro Winery and many other lavish auction items.

All proceeds of the South Beach Wine & Food Festival will once again benefit the Florida International University School of Hospitality and Tourism Management's Teaching Restaurant and the Southern Wine & Spirits Beverage Management Center, both located at Florida International University's Biscayne Bay Campus in North Miami. Students in the Hospitality School, one of the country's top-ranked educators of travel, tourism, and food and beverage industry professionals, assisted organizers with sponsorship fulfillment, restaurant and exhibitor recruitment, logistics, registration, inventory, as well as worked alongside celebrity chefs to prepare gourmet meals that were accompanied by fine wines and premium spirits. The Festival continues to make available countless opportunities for up-and-coming hoteliers, sommeliers, chefs and restaurateurs to work alongside the world's very best practitioners in every facet of the industry.

The School of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Florida International University and beverage distributor Southern Wine & Spirits of Florida hosted the event in association with such sponsors as American Airlines, American Express, Bank of America, Belvedere Vodka, City of Miami Beach, Evian Natural Spring Water, KitchenAid, Loews Miami Beach Hotel, Moët & Chandon, Schieffelin & Co, Target and Wine Spectator to name a few.

Attendees feasted on gastronomic delights prepared by top names in the culinary world such as Emeril Lagasse, Mario Batali, Charlie Trotter, Norman Van Aken, Dean Fearing, Daniel Boulud, Nobu Matsuhisa, Nigella Lawson, Todd English, Mark Militello, Marcus Samuelsson, Rachael Ray, Tyler Florence, Giada De Laurentiis, Ming Tsai and dozens of other culinary superstars.

Patrons quenched their thirst with an astounding 750 different varieties of wine, champagne, and fine spirits. All together, more than 22,000 bottles were poured during the weekend, which included the glamorous Moët & Chandon BubbleQ, educational wine seminars, an exquisite dinner series and the hugely popular Grand Tastings. The latter attracted 6,000 people on both Saturday and Sunday to a gorgeous tented village on the white sand overlooking the Atlantic Ocean between 10th and 13th Streets and Ocean Drive. One hundred and forty local restaurants and caterers added to the excitement on both days Grand Tastings (65 on Saturday and 75 on Sunday) by providing generous samples that gave patrons a comprehensive taste of South Florida's eclectic food scene, which continues to gain international attention.

Next year marks the Fifth Anniversary of the South Beach Wine & Food Festival scheduled to take place February 24-26, 2006.

For more information, please visit hospitality.fiu.edu.

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