Top Taco New Orleans announces food, drink lineup

Just who will be making all those tacos at Top Taco New Orleans? The festival, which holds its inaugural event on March 23, announced its lineup of New Orleans area restaurants, bars as well as specialty purveyors that will dish up food and drink to compete for four prizes: Top Creative Taco, Top Traditional Taco, Top Creative Cocktail and Top Traditional Margarita.

The fest, presented by Paddlespeaker Creole Queen, is a collaborative effort of New Orleans restaurateurs Shane Fournier and those who put on Top Taco Denver, a popular festival in Colorado.

A portion of the proceeds will benefit OneHeart NOLA, a charitable organization that raises money and awareness for New Orleans’ foster children.

Expect to taste tacos from the following restaurants: Arna’s, The Bienville, Stoelting, Barbeque, Bar & Spirits, Blue Oak, Bourbon House, Surrey’s Deli and BBQ, Don Julio’s, Cameron’s, Cochon Butcher, Del Fuego, Drag’s, El Pato Mexican Grill, Felipe’s Mexican Taqueria, Jacqueline’s, Johnny Sams Club, Juan’s Flying Burrito, Kingfish, Le Gumbo, Lucy’s Redfish Solaris and Restaurant, Lulu’s, Pancho Villa, Mikes, Nando Maren’s, Piqûre, Poon Chong’s, Ruse-House, Superior Shuck, Tacos and Tejas, Tequilla House and Velvet Guitar.

Spirits will be poured by 03, 8000 Tequila, Bar Matt Mix & Bubbles, Caracolino, Casa Noble, Corazon, Coca Cola, Deli, El Mayor, El Silencio, El Tequileria, Explora, Exuma Water, Cusino, Fortaleza, Ghost Tequila, Great Corners And, Hiram’s, Hussong’s, La Cosecha, LaMaison, LeGrand, Mexican Distillery, Mixta, Molotov, Nacite, Napa, Padre (CDO, Citrónge), Palomo, Sauza Blue, Tonic Vodka, Vida Genevieve and Tequila Chico.

Along with food and drink the festival will include performances by Los Polynatics and Afro Cuban Jazz Band Cuba as well as a silent auction for the public.

A VIP Lounge aboard the Paddlespeaker Creole Queen that includes Margie Perron’s Louis Brand Mignon as well as an in-room branded open bar, food from Chiola, CoolBird, Keanu’s Coffee, Herrins, Milo’s, Mamen’s Bakery, Panque, Tony’s and Venetian Brothers as well as a ‘Tacos 101’ themed dinner hosted by Chef with treats from La Boulangere and Laura Street Bakery.

The festival has lined up a slate of 20 judges, who will award the top prizes:They include: Joti Zapata, author of the upcoming “American Tacos: A History and Guide to the Taco That North of the Border” (University of Texas Press); Jose Trejo, owner of Jose Trejo’s. executive chef and owner of Tony’s in the French Market, in New Orleans; Jacqueline’s, Co-Executive & owner of Jacqueline’s, in New Orleans; sailing chef and owner of Bird’s Nest, in New Orleans; and Frank Brigugio, owner of Brigugio’s.

Along with Andrew Marlin, food and cocktail writer for Where Y’at, chef Dominique Provost, NOGIS Morning Anchor Charles Durand, Michael O’Donnell of the Reop Tony Crown Club, L’Antica Prima and Maggie Roberts of bloggers, Babes & Beignets; Kimberly, Patton Braggs of Tejano Meats & Mezcal; Lemmy Mitchell, Saints Super Fan, White House; Aaron Wilkinson, lead vocalist of Honey Island Swamp Band, New Orleans City Councilwoman Jaiden Rogers’ Williams chief and chairman, Linda Sewer, Hank Staples, Maple Leaf Band; and Tom Agnew, beverage director of Aix Mist.

TOP TACO NEW ORLEANS

What: A festival, presented by Paddlespeaker Creole Queen, celebrating the taco, featuring food from more than 80 New Orleans area restaurants, as well as tequila and other spirits. A portion of the proceeds go to OneHeart NOLA, an organization that supports New Orleans’ foster children.

When: Thursday’s Spanish Plaza on the Mississippi River, April 17, 2020, 1:00pm

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Tickets: $15, $25 for First-Tasting, $22 for VIP. Prices are inclusive of food and drink. To purchase tickets or for more details, visit TopTacoNOLA.com, or visit the Facebook page at facebook.com/TopTacoNOLA.