

# Top Taco Festival Announces Final Judge, Restaurant, Beverage Lineup, Taco & Tequila Competition To Benefit One Heart NOLA

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NEW ORLEANS – The first annual Top Taco Festival, presented by Paddlewheeler Creole Queen, on Thursday, March 23, at Riverwalk's Spanish Plaza, will be a festive evening and

culinary competition benefitting One Heart NOLA, a non-profit organization dedicated to raising funds and awareness for the city's foster children.

The event will showcase more than 40 of New Orleans' acclaimed restaurants, 24 spirits and beverages, live entertainment by Los Poboycitos and Afro-Cuban jazz and groove band Otra; a silent auction; and the chance to crown winners in four categories: Top Creative Taco, Top Traditional Taco, Top Creative Cocktail and Top Traditional Margarita.

The event starts at 5:30 p.m. for 1<sup>st</sup> Tasting and VIP ticketholders, and 6:30 p.m. for the general public.

Event judges will include:

- Sal Agnello – Beverage Director of Ace Hotel
- Frank Brigtson – Owner of Brigtson's Restaurant
- Emily Coleman – Director of Partnerships of Tales of the Cocktail®
- Charles Divins – WDSU Morning Anchor
- Michael Durbin – Texas Taco Council
- Linda Green – "Yakamein Lady" and winner of Food Network's "Chopped: Pride of New Orleans"
- Abigail Gullo – Head Bartender of Compère Lapin
- Dominique Macquet – Chef
- Alessandra Madrid and Maggie Robert – Bloggers, Babes & Beignets
- Andrew Marin – Food and cocktail writer for *Where Y'at*
- Ian McNulty – food writer for *New Orleans Advocate*
- Leroy Mitchell – Whistle Monsta
- Kimberly Patton-Bragg – Owner/ operator of Three Muses Maple
- Jose Rajat – author of "American Tacos: A History and Guide to the Taco Trail North of the Border"
- Alon Shaya – Executive Chef and Partner of Domenica, Pizza Domenica and Shaya
- Hank Staples – Proprietor of Maple Leaf bar
- Aaron Wilkinson – Lead vocalist of Honey Island Swamp Band
- Liz Williams – Founder and President of the Southern Food & Beverage Museum (SoFAB)
- Jason Rogers Williams – New Orleans City Councilman

Participating restaurants will include:

- Anafa
- bacobar
- The Backyard
- Barcadia
- Bayou Burger & Sports Company
- Blue Oak BBQ
- Bourbon House
- Brugger's Barbecue & Barrel Proof
- Butcher
- Canal Street Bistro
- Carreta's Grill
- Del Fuego
- Drago's
- El Paso Mexican Grill
- Felipe's Mexican Taqueria
- Jacques Imo's
- Johnny Sanchez
- Juan's Flying Burrito
- Kingfish
- La Casita
- Lucy's Retired Surfers Bar & Restaurant
- Lula's
- Masquerade
- Mizado
- Nacho Mama's
- Patois
- PF Chang's
- Rum House
- Superior Grill
- Tacos and Beer
- Tequila House
- Velvet Cactus

Spirit and beverage participants will include:

- 03
- 1800 Tequila
- Barefoot Wine & Bubbly
- Casa Noble
- Casamigos
- Corona Beer
- Cuervo Tradicional
- Dekuyper
- Don Julio
- El Mayor
- El Silencio
- El Tesoro
- Espalón
- Evamor Water
- Exotico
- Fortaleza
- Ghost Tequila
- Gran Centenario
- Hornitos
- Hussong's
- Lunazul
- Maestro Dobel
- Modelo Especial
- Negra Modelo
- Patron
- Patron Citronage
- Patron XO
- Peligroso
- Sauza Blue
- Tequila Ocho
- Tito's Vodka
- Tres Generaciones

In addition to tasty bites and libations, Top Taco will also feature a curated silent auction with one-of-a-kind packages, laser tag and a VIP Lounge aboard the Paddlewheeler Creole Queen – with culinary creations from 10 exclusive VIP restaurants: Vincent's, Cowbell, Chiba, Horn's, Tracey's, Progue, Feeling's Café, Nameze, Norma's Bakery and Midway; live music by Muevelo, private Extra Anejo tequila tastings, premium open bar provided by Jim Beam Global and a Patron XO-infused dessert station featuring La Boulangerie and Laurel Street Bakery.

General admission passes are \$65 per person, 1<sup>st</sup> Tasting tickets are \$85 and include early entry, and VIP discounted tickets are \$125 per person which includes early entry plus the VIP Lounge experience on the Paddlewheeler Creole Queen.

[For more information](#)