



# Films, Foodies & Fans

A nod to the toque at  
the Maui Film Festival

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Taste of Wailea, held on the lawn with ocean views, is a festival high-light, proving that food and film are perfect partners.







**C**ERTAIN THINGS ARE identified with Maui, and the Maui Film Festival is one of them. It's a festival that brings stars of all stripes together: movie stars, culinary stars and bright nights under starry skies.

From June 4-8, five days of first-run, feature-length films, documentaries and shorts light up Wailea in several venues.

Movies are screened in the Maui Arts & Cultural Center's theaters in Kahului, and under starry skies across a 50-foot screen stretched across a swath of green, where the festival's Celestial Cinema is held nightly. Film stars, producers, directors and movie lovers flock to Wailea for the films and stay for the culinary events, where the spotlight turns to the chefs.

Taste of Chocolate, June 6 at Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea, has always been a culinary mainstay of the film festival. Savory appetizers, mini donuts prepared on the spot, chocolate avocado pudding and chocolate tarts with banana jam are just the tip of the chocolate iceberg.

The Four Seasons Executive Pastry Chef, Rhonda Ashton-Chavez, digs deep into her well of inspiration to create the menu for this event.

"Ideas pop into my head along the way," she says. "I try out new trends or flavor combinations that I think people will find fun and interesting and may never try otherwise. Personally, I enjoy the more creative mixtures, such as the chocolate and kalamata olive panini I did one year. And I love getting to play with fun stuff such as liquid nitrogen!"

It doesn't stop at food. Guests can also look forward to beer on draft and chocolate-infused cocktails and "Maui-tinis."

There's no time to catch your breath before Taste of Wailea, June 7, the culinary crown jewel of the Maui Film Festival. Held on the rolling green of the David Ledbetter Private Academy at Wailea Gold and Emerald Golf Courses, Taste of Wailea is to epicures what the Oscars are to film buffs.

In one spectacular afternoon, presenting the best of the resorts' collective culinary efforts, Wailea's top-rated chefs highlight the fresh harvests of Maui's farms, ranches and

**Among the many highlights of Taste of Wailea 2013 were tendril-laden prawns.**



The films are great—don't miss them—but you wouldn't want to miss out on the festival's edible offerings.

(From top) Taste of Chocolate delights; film festival attendees.



fishermen. True to the Islands' renowned Hawai'i Regional Cuisine (HRC) movement are the examples of fresh, locally sourced and island-influenced flavors and ingredients.

Past highlights have included creative coups such as Caesar crudo with crisp Málama Farms pork belly; watermelon gazpacho; Korean-style beef tacos with pickled carrots; and homemade kimchi.

As Executive Chef Tylun Pang of The Fairmont Kea Lani explains, "All of the fish and produce that we use for the event is locally sourced, just like at Kō restaurant. It doesn't influence the preparation, but it definitely impacts the flavor."

Chef Corey Waite of Monkeypod by Merriman's is equally committed to sourcing his ingredients from Maui. "Local products are of the utmost important to us," he says. "A lot of our farmers attend Taste of Wailea, and we like to showcase their meat and produce."

Each chef has his or her own approach to the dish. Chef Pang fondly remembers that "the year we served our signature lobster tempura and oishi sushi (our version of a spicy tuna roll) was fun. The food was so popular that it caused a scene around our booth: a happy disaster!"

Wailea's own celebrity chef, Bev Gannon, is no stranger to the event and keeps it simple and delicious. "When you are serving 600 guests a small plate of food, you have to make something that can be served quickly yet withstand the circumstances of the event: no kitchen; no running water; sun, heat, wind! It's what we call guerilla catering. Our crab cannelloni with lemongrass ginger sauce meets all these requirements, yet tastes fabulous, so it's always a huge hit."

These chefs bring their best to the table, resulting in exceptional cuisine. The films are great—don't miss them—but you wouldn't want to miss out on the other mouthwatering moments of the 15th Annual Maui Film Festival.

## IT'S STARGAZING TIME AGAIN

The Maui Film Festival is literally about stars. Film stars. Celestial stars. And starry skies above an oceanview setting on the flanks of a dormant volcano. It's all pretty hard to resist, which is why celebrities love the Maui Film Festival as much as film lovers do. Award nominees for the 2014 Maui Film Festival are named in May, but the excitement and speculation start early. Whoever wins this year will join prestigious company. Among the highlights is the celebrated Nova Award, granted for original and seamless performances by actors who consistently embody insight, humanity and wisdom. The 2013 award went to "Zero Dark Thirty's" Jessica Chastain. The Acad-

emy Award-nominated star of "The Help" and "Mama" came out to the island to be honored as part of the Festival's Celestial Cinema events. Past Nova Award recipients include Claire Danes, Zoëy Deschanel and James Marsden. Moviegoers also have a hand in determining the award winners. On a scale of one to five, those who attend the screenings are asked to vote on the films they watch. The scores determine the Audience Award winners. Whether you come to have a part in determining the best of the best, or simply to stargaze, the Maui Film Festival is a perennial island highlight. For details and a list of films and events, visit [www.mauifilmfestival.com](http://www.mauifilmfestival.com).



Celestial Cinema, outdoors, is always a festival highlight.