



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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TINIAN HOT PEPPER FESTIVAL LARGEST YET

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) – This month's 8th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival attracted the largest crowd ever for a weekend of island-style relaxation, feasting, and fun on the island.

Organizers reported a 22 percent increase in sales from the larger turnout on Feb 18-19, 2012.

The first-ever festival bike Fun Ride was organized by the Tinian Mayor's Office, with a quiet and picturesque course traversing island historic and scenic sites both on- and off-road. Special boat and airline fares attracted a number of first-time festivalgoers.

"We're pleased to partner with the Tinian Mayor's Office on another successful Tinian Hot Pepper Festival and are encouraged by the growing number of attendees," said Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) Community Projects Manager Martin Duenas. "The Pika Festival is the perfect opportunity for a holiday weekend getaway to Tinian, and we look forward to continuing to expand this annual signature event of the Northern Marianas."

Top bragging rights in the *donne sali* (hot pepper) eating contest went to Corey San Nicolas in the women's division and Jay San Nicolas in the men's division. For excellent taste and presentation, Bill Cing cooked up first place in the *estafao pika* contest.

On the sports front, Pikalicious Team topped the co-ed Tinian Hot Pepper Festival 4-Person Beach Volleyball Tournament 2012, while Team DCCA sailed away with 1st place in the Dragon Boat Race. Meanwhile, Osi Reyes' entry was slow but steady in winning the *umang* (hermit crab) race.

Adding to the visual appeal of the weekend, E&L Kitchen was selected as having the best booth decorations, and Augusta Famaw delivered the top-winning entry in the *mwar* (flower head lei) making competition.

The festival also included indigenous craft sales, live entertainment including cultural dances, Hapi the clown, and educational presentations by various government agencies.

The event was also supported by Joeten Ent., IT&E, Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino, MARPAC, DOCOMO, the Dept. of Public Safety, 13th Tinian Municipal Council, and other MVA members.

The Tinian Hot Pepper Festival is held every Presidents Day weekend in the Northern Mariana Islands.



The 8th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival was held on Feb. 18-19, 2012, at Tachogna Beach.



Youngsters prepare to start the *umang* (hermit crab) race at the 8th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 18-19, 2012.



Tinian resident Bill Cing prepares to add *donne sali* (hot pepper) to his winning *estafao pika* (spicy stew) at the 8th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 18-19, 2012.



Entries in the *mwar* (floral head lei) making contest at the 8th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 18-19, 2012.



Pikalicious Team topped the co-ed Tinian Hot Pepper Festival 4-Person Beach Volleyball Tournament 2012 held on Feb. 18-19 at Tachogna Beach, Tinian.

The Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are a chain of idyllic islands in the West Pacific, offering a friendly, fun and exciting vacation in paradise. They are an excellent destination for families, adventure and sports-minded travelers, as well as business people looking for a tropical haven. Adventurous travelers from Asia, Australia, Europe and elsewhere looking for new travel discoveries will find them in the Mariana Islands, just three hours travel from most cities in Japan, and four from Asia and Australia. The Northern Marianas are served from Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka in Japan by Delta and Asiana Airlines. From Korea, Asiana Airlines provides direct flights from Seoul and Busan. Fly Guam/Fly Marianas provides direct flights from Hong Kong and Nagoya, Japan. For more information visit www.mymarianas.com.

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