



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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WINNERS GALORE AT 9TH TINIAN HOT PEPPER FEST

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) –Hundreds of revelers turned out to celebrate the spicy and delicious 9th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 16-17, 2013.

The annual President's Day weekend celebration held in honor of donni sali, a small but potent hot pepper that is indigenous to the island, offered the perfect blend of island partying at the festival grounds and quiet escape at isolated beaches and back roads.

Brave souls and Tinian natives Corey Jess San Nicolas and Tina Marie San Nicolas topped the hot pepper eating competition in the men's and women's categories, respectively, each walking away \$150 richer for their efforts.

In the *estafao pika* (spicy beef stew) cooking competition, Carla Aldan received the winning nod from judges for her flavorful blend incorporating the celebrated pepper, while Renato Esteban chomped his way to 1st place in the JC Café Pikalicious Burger Eating Contest.

In the popular *umang* (hermit crab) race, a number of youngsters pitted their shelled competitors against each other on a wooden track. In four sets, first place went to Brayden John Santos, Cassidy Dela Cruz, Joseph Cing, and Kimo Adriano.

In more vigorous efforts, the team of the Tinian Mayor's Office topped the dragon boat race, team La Pica Loca hammered the beach volleyball win, Fritz San Nicolas took first in the tug of war, and Susan Macaranas danced away with 1st place in the cha-cha contest.

Rounding out the weekend of fun and festivity, Lorelina Saralu won top honors in the *mwarmwar* (Carolinian head lei) making competition, and Mariana Cruz pocketed \$150 for having the best-decorated booth at the venue.

The annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival is held on Presidents Day weekend in February is organized by the Marianas Visitors Authority and co-sponsored by the Tinian Mayor's Office, 13th Tinian Municipal Council, Department of Public Safety (Traffic/Boating Section), Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino, Lieutenant Governor Jude U. Hofschneider, KKMP, J.C. Café', MARPAC, Star Marianas Airlines, IT&E, Lucky Qiang Market, Star Marine Sports and Fleming Hotel.



Participating chefs at the 9th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 1-17, 2013, in the Northern Mariana Islands.



An entry in the *estafao pika* (spicy beef stew) cooking competition during the 9th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival in the Northern Mariana Islands on Feb. 16-17, 2013.



Contestants get ready to start the hot pepper eating competition during the 9th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival in the Northern Mariana Islands on Feb. 16-17, 2013.

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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