



**MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY**  
**News Release**

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*Tourism is Everybody's Business!*

**PERRY JOHN P. TENORIO**  
MVA MANAGING DIRECTOR

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For further information, contact:  
Perry John P. Tenorio, Managing Director  
Marianas Visitors Authority  
Telephone: (670) 664-3200/3201 Facsimile: (670) 664-3237  
[mva@my Marianas.com](mailto:mva@my Marianas.com)  
[www.mymarianas.com](http://www.mymarianas.com)

## **11<sup>TH</sup> TINIAN HOT PEPPER FEST JUST “PIKA”**

**Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI)** – “Pika” is the perfect word to describe the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 14-15, 2015, as “pika” is a Chamorro word that can mean both “spicy” or “spot-on.”

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. Mayor JP San Nicholas welcomed visitors to the event during the opening ceremony, where Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) Managing Director Perry Tenorio and 15<sup>th</sup> Tinian Municipal Council Chairman Raynaldo Cing also spoke.

Twenty-five vendors joined the event, which also featured non-stop entertainment, including live performances by Kiilani Dance group, the Sunset Cruisers, and Danny Laniyo of Saipan. Other entertainment was provided by groups from Tinian, including Tinian Elementary Chamorro Bilingual Group, Tom Hoshi’s Dance Group, HD Crew Dance, Nikita & Anthony’s Band, Tao Tao Taga Cultural Dance Academy, and more.

“The island of Tinian has much to offer visitors throughout the year in terms of natural beauty and history,” said MVA Community Projects Manager Martin Duenas. “But the Hot

Pepper Festival puts Tinian's island life and island hospitality in the spotlight, making it a great weekend for all."

Tinian native Corey Jess San Nicolas again took bragging rights in the hot pepper eating competition men's division. In the women's set, Lucia Ayuyu walked away with the top honor. Both also earned \$150, while 2<sup>nd</sup> place winners earned \$100, and third place winners garnered \$75.

In the *estafao pika* (spicy beef stew) cooking competition, Jason Santos received the winning nod from judges for his flavorful blend incorporating the celebrated pepper.

In the popular *umang* (hermit crab) race, a number of youngsters pitted their shelled competitors against each other on a wooden track. First place went to Hailey Rae Santos' entry in the girls division and Brayden Santos in the boys division.

In more vigorous efforts, the team of JC Café topped the dragon boat race, Team Umang hammered the beach volleyball win, and hot pepper champion San Nicholas also took 1<sup>st</sup> place in the tug of war.

Rounding out the weekend of fun and festivity, Nang's Snack Mobile pocketed \$200 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 MVA and co-sponsored by the Tinian Mayor's Office, Tinian Municipal Council, Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino, and MARPAC.



Bands and dance groups including the Sunset Cruisers provided live entertainment during the 11th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival in the Northern Mariana Islands on Feb. 14-15, 2015.



Ladies compete in the hot pepper eating contest during the 11th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival in the Northern Mariana Islands on Feb. 14-15, 2015.



The crowd enjoys entertainment at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 14-15, 2015, in the Northern Mariana Islands.

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 and Osaka in Japan by Delta and Asiana Airlines. From Korea, Asiana provides direct flights from Seoul and Busan. From China, direct flight service from Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Tianjin, Hangzhou and Wuhan to Saipan is available. United Airlines has daily flight connections from nine cities in Japan to Saipan with one stop. United States mainland connections can be made by Delta Air Lines to Saipan via Tokyo Narita, and United Airlines via Guam. For more information, visit [www.mymarianas.com](http://www.mymarianas.com).

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