



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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TASTE OF THE MARIANAS KICKS OFF

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) – The 18th Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden kicked off on Saturday (May 7) night, bringing some of the best of island cuisine and entertainment to American Memorial Park.

The event is held every Saturday evening beginning at 6 p.m. in May as part of the month-long celebration of Tourism Month in the Northern Mariana Islands.

“We’re so pleased to be working again this year with HANMI and American Memorial Park to make this event possible for our visitors and residents,” said Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) Managing Director Christopher A. Concepcion. “I was surprised to hear some residents were there for the first time last week. We hope everyone will make time this month to experience the Taste.”

For the first time, MVA has three heats of the Hotdog Eating Competition, with Conall Hartig finishing first in the Ages 10-13 Heat, followed by Thomas Benavente in second place, and Miles Timmons rounding out the winners. In the Ages 14-17 Heat, Dylan Camacho finished in 1st, followed by Jonathan Camacho in 2nd. In the adult division, Simon Necesito improved on his 2015 2nd place finish to nab 1st place, while 2015 3rd place finisher Ray Emul also chomped his way to an improved 2nd place finish this year. Marlo Ibanez finished third. The winners won Taste tokens prizes of \$50, \$30, and \$20. The contest was also supported by Herman’s Modern

Bakery and Fiesta Resort & Spa.

Saturday's entertainment lineup included a preview of the NMI's performing arts delegates to the Festival of Pacific Arts (FESTPAC) to be held this month in Guam.

"We wanted to provide an opportunity for our delegates to showcase their talent to the community before they head off to represent us at FESTPAC," said MVA Community Projects Manager Martin Duenas. "It was awesome to see such a large group of Chamorro and Carolinian dancers performing, and we look forward to more of FESTPAC delegation performances this month."

The MVA is has budgeted \$50,000 to support the NMI's participation in the Pacific-wide arts and culture celebration.

Taste of the Marianas offers international cuisine at affordable prices by 17 hotels, restaurants, and drink vendors; non-stop live entertainment on the main stage; nightly contests on the secondary stage; and arts and crafts sales.

This Saturday's (May 14) Taste will feature the Pie-eating Competition at the rear stage, at 7 p.m. with the Ages 10-13 Heat, at 7:30 p.m. with the Ages 14-17 Heat, and at 8 p.m. with the Age 18 and Older Heat.



Mariana Resort & Spa and 16 other food and beverage vendors, including other members of the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands, served up dinner and dessert on opening night of the 18th Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden on May 7, 2016, in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The event is held every Saturday during May Tourism Month beginning at 6 p.m. at American Memorial Park.



Furusato Restaurant and 16 other food and beverage vendors served up dinner and dessert on opening night of the 18th Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden on May 7, 2016, in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The event is held every Saturday during May Tourism Month beginning at 6 p.m. at American Memorial Park.



Herman's Modern Bakery served up roast pig and other dishes alongside 16 other food and beverage vendors on opening night of the 18th Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden on May 7, 2016, in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The event is held every Saturday during May Tourism Month beginning at 6 p.m. at American Memorial Park.



Coral Ocean Point Resort staff describe their desserts to customers on opening night of the 16th Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden on May 7, 2016, in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The event is held every Saturday during May Tourism Month beginning at 6 p.m. at American Memorial Park.



Artists and craftspeople displayed and sold their wares – including locally made noni products - on opening night of the 18th Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden on May 7, 2016, in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands.



Conall Hartig, second from right, ruled the Ages 10-13 heat of the Hotdog Eating Competition at the Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival and Beer Garden on May 7, 2016. He was followed by Thomas Benavente, right, and Miles Timmons, fourth from right, in third place.



Simon Necesito, last year's 2nd place finisher, chomps his way to 1st place in the Adult Heat of the Hotdog Eating Competition during the Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden on May 7, 2016, in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands.



Chamorro dancers who will represent the Northern Mariana Islands at this month's Festival of Pacific Arts in Guam perform at the 18th Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden on May 7, 2016, in Saipan.



Carolinian dancers of the Talabwog Women's Group who will represent the Northern Mariana Islands at this month's Festival of Pacific Arts in Guam perform at the 18th Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden on May 7, 2016, in Saipan.



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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. United Airlines has daily flight connections from nine cities in Japan to Saipan via Guam. United States mainland connections can be made by United Airlines to Saipan via Guam, and Delta Airlines from the west coast to Saipan via Narita. For more information visit www.mymarianas.com.

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