



## The San Diego Food + Wine Festival Returns November 2–9, 2025

*The James Beard Foundation® Partners with the  
West Coast's Premier Culinary Festival*

*Debuts Wellness Weekend, Expands Food Policy Programming, and Welcomes Global  
Culinary Talent*

(San Diego / August 27, 2025) - The West Coast's premier culinary celebration is back and bolder than ever! From November 2–9, 2025, the San Diego Food + Wine Festival (SDFW) transforms “America’s Finest City” into an eight-day epicurean playground, blending flavor, culture, wellness, and advocacy in a way no other festival does.

Now in its 21st year, San Diego Food + Wine has evolved into one of the largest culinary festivals of impact in the country, attracting over 11,000 food and wine enthusiasts from both sides of the U.S./Mexico border. Beyond just an entertainment event, the festival unites James Beard Award winners, Michelin-seasoned chefs, world-class winemakers, and innovators for eight days of extraordinary experiences.

This year ushers in a bold new chapter: an expanded James Beard Foundation partnership, the first-ever Wellness Weekend featuring chef-driven, nutrient-dense dishes and trendsetting zero-proof cocktails, a can't-miss live filming of the Outdoor Channel's *Jason the Butcher* during the Grand Tasting, and an expanded roster of James Beard Award winners, Michelin-starred chefs, and national food celebrities from across the U.S. and Mexico headlining across the week. Alongside the continuation of the Festival's Food Rescue Program and a slate of dynamic new activations, these elements will redefine how guests experience food, wine, culture and a commitment to sustainability at the Festival.

“Each year, the San Diego Food + Wine Festival reflects the evolution of our food culture, but 2025 is truly a watershed moment. With an expanded partnership with the James Beard Foundation, an extraordinary lineup of award-winning talent, and bold new experiences like Wellness Weekend and Forkcast: The Future of Food Summit, we're creating a festival that is as forward-thinking as it is celebratory. San Diego has become one of the most exciting culinary crossroads in the country, and this year's Festival embodies that spirit,” says SDFW co-founder, Michelle Metter.



According to Metter, the festival highlights the city’s rich multinational influences and its sunny, diverse culinary landscape where guests can expect the largest curated collection of wine, beer and spirits producers, along with culinary heavyweights from San Diego, Baja and beyond.

“What makes this Festival special is how it brings together global excellence and local diversity,” says Metter. “From James Beard Award winners to rising stars from San Diego and Baja, our chefs reflect a vibrant, multicultural community. At the same time, programs like Food Rescue, our [Scholarship Program](#) and the Future of Food Summit remind us that food is not just about flavor, but about sustainability and supporting the people behind the plate.”

## **CULINARY ICONS AND RISING STARS FROM ACROSS THE U.S. AND MEXICO**

The festival honors the influence of Latin, Asian and BIPOC cultures on Southern California’s exploding food and beverage scene, uniting top chefs from the United States and Mexico. Renowned culinary talents from *Food Network* and *Top Chef* will join chefs honored by the *Michelin Guide* and the *James Beard Foundation*. A highlight of this year’s culinary and beverage powerhouses include:

- Elijah Arizmendi (LUCIAN, La Jolla) formerly of 3-star Joël Robuchon and 3-star Per Se
- Darryl Bell (*Stateline Road Smokehouse*, Napa Valley, James Beard Award Semifinalist)
- Maynard Llera (*Kuya Lord*, LA, 2024 James Beard Award for Best Chef: California)
- Matt Vawter (Rootstalk, Denver, 2024 James Beard Award for Best Chef: Mountain Region)
- Emily Brubaker (Omni La Costa Resort & Spa, 2025 Winner of NBC’s *Yes, Chef!*)
- Carlos Gaytan (*Hà*, Playa del Carmen, Mexico, 1-star Michelin and *Tzuc*, Chicago, *Bravo Top Chef*)
- Roberto Alcocer (*Malva*, Valle de Guadalupe and *Valle*, Oceanside, 1-star Michelin)
- Tara Monsod (*Le Coq*, La Jolla, 2024-25 James Beard Award Finalist )
- Cesar Zapata (*Phuc Yea*, Miami, Michelin Bib Gourmand)
- Ruffo Ibarra (Baja, Bocuse d’Or)
- Suzette Gresham (2-star Michelin *Aquerello*, San Francisco)
- Drew Deckman (1-star Michelin, Concha de Piedra, Valle de Guadalupe, Baja + 31THIRTYONE)
- Pyet DeSpain (Winner, *Next Level Chef*)
- Oliver Seki (*Seki Restaurante*, Baja, Bocuse d’Or)
- Cha McCoy (Sommelier, Grand Decant Host)
- Marcelo Hisaki (*Restaurant Amores*, Baja, Michelin + Bocuse d’Or)



An epic array of over 800 incredible wines and spirits will be poured throughout the festival, representing the world’s most distinguished wine-growing regions. Guests will enjoy selections from Paso Robles, Lake County, Wines of Georgia, Côtes du Rhone, Baja, Spain, France, Lodi, Temecula, Napa Valley, San Diego County, Sonoma County, Santa Rita Hills, Washington State, and Willamette Valley, to name a few. Spirits enthusiasts will have chances during the week to taste from some of the world’s most sought-after whiskeys, learn about tequila and mezcal, and explore low and alcohol-free wine and spirit options.

### **BOLD NEW COLLABORATIONS AND FESTIVAL FIRSTS**

- **11.2 SDFW WELLNESS WEEKEND:** Delicious, nutrient-rich dishes, low/no ABV pairings, movement pop-ups, and activations from leading wellness brands at the visionary agri-hood, [Fox Point Farms](#).
- **11.3 INDUSTRY NIGHT PRESENTED BY CHEF WORKS – Bica Block Party:** The ultimate hospitality industry “thank you” party. A celebration for exhibitors, sponsors and this year’s scholarship recipients along with all the chefs and restaurants whose participation makes the Festival possible.
- **11.6: BAJA CULINARY EXPEDITION: A Journey Through Michelin Guide Mexico:** Experience a journey through Michelin Guide Mexico with acclaimed chefs and winemakers, rare wines, Michelin-honored talent, and cross-border culinary artistry.
- **11.6: FORKCAST: THE FUTURE OF FOOD SUMMIT:** This summit will bring together changemakers shaping the future of our food system. Chefs, policymakers, activists, scholars, and industry leaders will explore the intersection of food, policy, equity, and sustainability through engaging panel discussions and community dialogue.
- 11.6, 11.7, 11.9: [CULINARY CINEMA](#): The Coronado Island Film Festival and SDFW will once again partner to showcase rich, food inspired films that will screen during this year’s festival. In addition to the screenings, the series will feature engaging panel discussions, providing insights from filmmakers, on-screen talent, and renowned chefs.
- 11.7 [FRIENDS OF JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION Opening Night: Grand Decant](#): Kick off the Grand Weekend with an unforgettable evening of rare pours, iconic flavors, and culinary excellence. It’s the best of the best, poured and plated, setting the tone for San Diego’s most delicious weekend. Global wine and spirits brands will uncork their most



coveted bottles including award-winning vintages, small-batch spirits, and collectible labels worth savoring, paired with a standout lineup of celebrated chefs, rising stars, and Michelin-honored and James Beard Award winners and nominees from across the country serving their signature bites.

- 11.8 [GRAND TASTING](#): An epic waterfront celebration of all-star chef and beverage talent featuring Live Fire VIP experiences, Michelin-rated and James Beard nominated chefs, the return of Cohn Restaurant Group’s “Cohnchella”, One World Beef’s Brandt Experience, Grind & Prosper Hospitality’s “Tropic Like It’s Hot,” live music and tons of immersive tastings from Paso Robles Wine Country, Temecula, Sonoma, Lake County, and international wine and spirits
- 11.8-9 [THAT’S COOL!](#) Bagavagabonds partners with the Festival to debut *That’s Cool! Try & Buy Shoppe*, a new experience-driven retail pop-up at Malibu Farms in Seaport Village. Located steps from the Festival entrance, the Shoppe will spotlight emerging brands through free daily programming and curated evening events featuring food, beverage, art, and music. No ticket necessary and open to the public (21+), *That’s Cool!* offers an immersive space to sample, sip, and shop, extending the Festival experience beyond the gates.
- 11.9 [GRAND FIESTA](#): The capstone to the Grand Weekend - a vibrant celebration of food, beverage and culture from Baja and beyond, featuring expanded cross-border connections, more guest Bocuse d’Or and Michelin recognized chefs from Mexico, and an even larger selection of Baja wines and spirits. Guests will enjoy abundant culinary stations, live music, and an expanded version of the beloved annual “Taco TKO” competition, the ultimate showdown of taco supremacy, to include a new “Overall Best Bite” category.

## **EXCLUSIVE CHEF DINNERS AND CULINARY ADVENTURES**

- [\*Tropic Like It’s Hot Preview:\*](#)

A Little Italy takeover from the dynamos at Grind & Proper Hospitality with tastes from *Miss B’s Coconut Club*, *Park 101*, *Louisiana Purchase*, *Coco Maya* and *Cococabana*, and

featuring a powerhouse trio: chefs Troy Williams, Quinnton Austin and Phillip Humphrey.



- *Bad Boyz BBQ at Ranch 45:*  
Featuring BBQ heavyweights including the Chef Warner DuVal, and [Bad Boyz of Culinary](#) program director Chef Tony Bennett, Jr. slinging their best with Brandt Beef
- 11.5: *A Tribute to Auguste Escoffier: An Evening of Culinary Mastery at Fairmont Grand Del Mar:*  
Flor Franco hosts an exclusive, multi-course culinary journey rooted in Escoffier’s legacy but reimagined by today’s most dynamic chefs. Each course will be paired with rare and vintage wines.
- *10 Year Anniversary: Les Amis de Bernard: Louis Latour Signature Wine Dinner*  
Join award-winning chefs Bernard Guillas, Rafael Corniel, Aron Schwartz, Suzette Gresham, and Katsuya Fukushima for a night to remember at Marriott Marquis San Diego Marina.
- *David Arthur Wine Dinner at Mister A’s:*  
A five-course dinner at the city’s most iconic restaurant with Napa Valley’s David Author Winery

Individual tickets and weekend packages are currently available for purchase for the [Grand Decant](#), [Grand Tasting](#), and [Grand Fiesta](#) experiences. Travelers can find information on hotel partner packages [here](#) and flights via our official airline partner, [Southwest](#). For more information, please visit the festival [website](#) and Instagram at [@sdfoodwine](#).

### **ABOUT THE JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION**

The James Beard Foundation (JBF) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that celebrates and supports the people behind America’s food culture, while pushing for new standards in the restaurant industry to create a future where all have the opportunity to thrive. Established over 30 years ago, the Foundation has highlighted the centrality of food culture in our daily lives and is committed to supporting a resilient and flourishing industry that honors its diverse communities. By amplifying new voices, celebrating those leading the way, and supporting those on the path to do so, the Foundation is working to create a more equitable and sustainable future—what we call Good Food for Good®. JBF brings its mission to life through

the annual Awards, industry and community-focused programs, advocacy, partnerships, and events across the country. For the first time in the Foundation’s history, exceptional culinary talent, industry leaders, and visitors from NYC and beyond can experience unforgettable dining and educational programming at [Platform by JBF](#)—and be the first to try new food concepts at the Good To Go by JBF kiosk—inspiring food and beverage devotees for decades to come. Learn more at [jamesbeard.org](#), sign up for our



newsletter, and follow @beardfoundation on social media.

**ABOUT THE SAN DIEGO FOOD + WINE FESTIVAL**

The 21st Annual San Diego Food + Wine Festival is an international showcase of the world's premier wine and spirits producers, chefs and culinary personalities, and gourmet foods. Held November 1-9, 2025, the award-winning festival raises funds for culinary, oenology and hospitality scholarships and grants, and has awarded over \$600,000 to individuals and nonprofits through previous events. For more information, please visit [www.sandiegowineclassic.com](http://www.sandiegowineclassic.com) and @sdfoodwine.

The San Diego Food + Wine Festival is funded in part with City of San Diego Tourism Marketing District Assessment Funds.

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