



## **James Beard Award-Winning Chef Paul Bartolotta to be Honored as Chef de Cuisine at 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Naples Winter Wine Festival on January 26-28, 2024**

**Naples, FL** (June 19, 2023) – The Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF), founders of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, is pleased to announce that four-time nominated and two-time James Beard award-winning Chef Paul Bartolotta will be honored as Chef de Cuisine at the 24<sup>th</sup> annual Naples Winter Wine Festival on January 26-28, 2024 at The Ritz-Carlton Naples, Tiburón.

For more than 30 years, Bartolotta has brought his culinary talent and vision to kitchens all over the world, from Italy to Paris to New York to Las Vegas. With an education and training steeped in tradition and authenticity, he has earned numerous accolades from the James Beard Foundation, *Michelin Guide*, *The New York Times*, Distinguished Restaurants of North America (DiRoNA), AAA, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* and others.

As the Festival's Chef de Cuisine, Bartolotta will be celebrated for his passion for creating authentic experiences and inspirational growth of the company that he and his late brother, Joe, launched in 1993. Bartolotta has won the James Beard Foundation Award twice – for "Best Chef: Midwest" (1994, Spiaggia) and for "Best Chef: Southwest" (2009, Bartolotta Ristorante di Mare).

"Having participated in the Naples Winter Wine Festival in recent years, I have witnessed the profound and sustaining difference that the event has on children in the community," Bartolotta said. "I am sincerely honored to be named as the 2024 NWWF Chef de Cuisine and I look forward to joining some of the very best chefs and vintners in the world for such an important cause."

Originally from Wisconsin, Bartolotta graduated from the Restaurant and Hotel Management Program at Milwaukee Area Technical College. His professional training began in New York City with famed restaurateur Tony May, owner of the Rainbow Room and founder of Gruppo Ristoratori Italiani. With May's support, Bartolotta traveled to Italy and trained in some of the country's most prestigious restaurants, learning the art of authentic Italian cooking.

Throughout his career, Bartolotta has worked at 15 restaurants in Italy – from Sicily to the Alps – acquiring knowledge and expertise in 14 of the country's 22 culinary regions. In France, he has worked alongside some of the world's most acclaimed chefs, including Paul Bocuse and Roger Vergé, among others, and at restaurants that include La Maison Troisgros and Le Taillevent.

Following his education in Europe, Bartolotta returned to New York to open San Domenico restaurant, earning Three Stars from *The New York Times* at the age of 24. Bartolotta then moved to Chicago, where he spent nine years as Executive Chef and Managing Partner of Spiaggia, directing it to many national fine dining awards, including a Four Diamond Rating from AAA, the DiRoNA Award and numerous awards from both *Chicago Magazine* and *The Chicago Tribune*.

Bartolotta returned to Milwaukee to help launch The Bartolotta Restaurants with his brother, including their first concept Ristorante Bartolotta, an authentic Italian restaurant paying homage to the family name. Today, their restaurant group operates 17 award-winning restaurants and catering facilities, including Bacchus – A Bartolotta Restaurant, Bartolotta’s Lake Park Bistro and Harbor House. In 2001, Bartolotta launched Bartolotta Ristorante di Mare at the Wynn Las Vegas.

Bartolotta is known to TV audiences worldwide for his appearances on such popular shows as *Top Chef*, *Iron Chef*, *Today*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, *The Talk*, and *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. In 1997, he received the Insegna del Ristorante Italiano del Mondo recognizing him as an authentic ambassador of Italy cuisine from then-President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro. In 2019, he assumed the leadership role at The Bartolotta Restaurants upon the passing of his brother.

“With over three decades of culinary excellence and innovation, Paul is the perfect choice as our 2024 Chef de Cuisine,” said Donna Solimene, 2024 Chef Committee Co-Chair. “An internationally celebrated chef and restaurateur, he joins an impressive list of prestigious winemakers, chefs and sommeliers, setting the stage for a weekend of unique, one-of-a-kind food and wine experiences.”

With the theme “Generosity in Full Bloom,” the 2024 Naples Winter Wine Festival returns to The Ritz-Carlton Naples, Tiburón showcasing the finest wines, exquisite cuisine and incredible auction lots to benefit children in need in Collier County. Anticipation for another outstanding Festival is already building under the leadership of the 2024 NWWF Chairs Shelly and Ralph Stayer.

Festival guests will once again join in this charitable mission in 2024 as they bid on incredible, one-of-a-kind experiences during the famed live auction, part of a weekend that will also feature intimate dinners in elegant, private homes and settings showcasing world-class food and wine.

For additional information, please visit: [napleswinefestival.com/about-the-festival](https://napleswinefestival.com/about-the-festival).

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### **About Naples Winter Wine Festival**

The Naples Winter Wine Festival, one of the world's most prestigious charity wine auctions, offers a weekend of unforgettable memories. Guests enjoy world-class food and wine during intimate dinners in elegant, private homes and settings throughout Naples and are invited to bid on once-in-a-lifetime travel and wine experiences during an electrifying live auction. Since its inaugural event in 2001, the NWWF has raised approximately \$269 million, making a profound difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of children.

### **About Naples Children & Education Foundation**

The Naples Children & Education Foundation, the founding organization of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, is improving the educational, emotional and health outcomes of underprivileged and at-risk children. Through its annual grants and strategic initiatives, NCEF has impacted 60 of the most effective nonprofits in the community, providing more than 300,000 children with the services and resources they need to excel. NCEF's unique approach, which emphasizes

collaboration between organizations and bridges public and private resources, has become a blueprint for how to transform a community, one issue at a time.

For additional information on the Naples Children & Education Foundation or the Naples Winter Wine Festival, contact Lisa Juliano at [lisa@napleswinefestival.com](mailto:lisa@napleswinefestival.com) or 239-514-2239.