

LAKE OCONEE
FOOD & WINE
FESTIVAL • 2026

THE RITZ-CARLTON REYNOLDS, LAKE OCONEE

March 19-22



FESTIVAL ITINERARY

FRIDAY

THE WELLNESS STATION

The Directors' Room | 1:00PM

THE VINTNER DINNER

The Pavilion | 5:15PM cocktails 5:45PM dinner

THE BOURBON & BITES DINNER

The Forest Tent | 5:15PM cocktails 5:45PM dinner

THE LAUNCH PARTY

The Ritz-Carlton Ballroom | 8:00PM - Midnight

SATURDAY

THE WELLNESS STATION

The Directors' Room | 8:00PM

THE RIDE & DRIVE

The Front Drive | 9:00AM - 2:00PM

THE MARKET PLACE

The Ritz-Carlton Ballroom | 10:00AM - 4:00PM

THE BREW & QUE

The Forest Tent | 11:30AM - 2:00PM

THE PRIVATE WINE TASTING

The Reynolds Ballroom | 3:00 - 4:30PM

THE GRAND TASTING

The Festival Venue | 6:00 - 9:00PM

SUNDAY

THE WELLNESS STATION

The Directors' Room | 8:00AM

BRUNCHISSIMO

Amore del Lago | 11:00AM



Dear Friends & Patrons,

On behalf of The Lake Oconee Food & Wine Festival, I want to extend my overwhelming heartfelt gratitude for your meaningful and enduring support.

We are kicking things off in spectacular fashion with the Great Gatsby Launch Party, setting a lively tone for making the entire weekend a roaring success!

We are thrilled to welcome Emerald Empire Band to the stage. These talented masters of groovy soul and funky rhythm will grab you by the seat of your pants and shake ya till you drop!

Our sincere thanks also go to Pine Ridge Vineyards, Horse Soldier Bourbon and Four Roses Bourbon. Their commitment allows our guests to participate in a world-class experience as they savor the weekend's festivities.

Beyond the flapper dresses and fine spirits, your generosity serves a vital purpose. Through your ticket purchases, auction bids and sponsorships, you are making a lasting impact on local education and the arts, specifically benefiting Baldwin-Putnam Young Life, Gatewood Schools, Georgia Writers Museum, Pete Nance Boys and Girls Club, Putnam Reads, Spencer Bradley Foundation, The Plaza Arts Center and The Victory Train.

We are grateful for your continued support and are looking forward to raising a glass with you again in 2027! Cheers to great food, fine wine & spirits and even better company!

Sincerely,

Marie Rainey
2026 Chair | Lake Oconee Food & Wine Festival

EVENT DETAILS

THE VINTNER DINNER

3-20-2026 | AT THE PAVILION | COCKTAILS 5:15PM; DINNER 5:45PM

Sponsor-only five-course meal featuring wines from Pine Ridge Vineyards.

FEATURING:



DENNIS VANTERPOOL
EXECUTIVE CHEF



MICHEAL GADDY
EXECUTIVE PASTRY CHEF



JESTINA PAMBU
BANQUET CHEF



BLAIR CHRISTOPHE DAVIS
GARDE MANGER CHEF

FEATURED VINTNER:

PINE RIDGE
VINEYARDS

COLLEEN FITZGERALD
HEAD WINEMAKER,
CHENIN BLANC + VIOGNIER

FLOWERS BY:

Designs by Kent
Flowers for weddings and events

SPECIALTY COCKTAIL:

Tito's



Handmade
VODKA
AUSTIN ★ TEXAS

WATER PROVIDER:

SINCE 1872
SARATOGA

THE VINTNER DINNER MENU

*All wines provided by Pine Ridge Vineyards, Featured Vintner of
The Lake Oconee Food & Wine Festival, 2026*

FIRST COURSE

SWEET CORN BISQUE

Peekytoe Crab | Smoked Bacon | Poached Quail Eggs | Handpicked Herbs
- North Coast Sauvignon Blanc 2024 -

SECOND COURSE

CORAL GARDEN

Crispy Rice Paper Reef | Hydro Bibb | Caviar | Sea Beans | Flowers Petals
Citrus Pearls | Capers | Crème Fraiche Dressing
- Chenin Blanc + Viognier 2024 -

INTERMEZZO

TROPICAL CORNET

Hibiscus - Cardamom Sorbet | Basil Essence | Lime Pepper

THIRD COURSE

SEAR & SEA

Reverse Seared Spinalis & Grilled Herb-Shelled Prawn
Hasselback Potato | Young Carrot | Blistered Caulilini | Romesco Hollandaise
Pickled Mustard Seeds | Cabernet Demi
- Napa Valley Cabernet 2023 -

FOURTH COURSE

THE CREAMERY

Local Tomme | Point Reyes Blue | Parmesan Flan
Peach Chutney | Lavender Honey | Cashew
Parmigiano Cracker | Grape Jelly Grapes
- Stags Leap Cabernet 2022 -

FIFTH COURSE

MIDNIGHT ORCHARD

Blueberry Cassis Semi-Freddo | Blackberry Cheesecake | Meadows
Belgium Cookie Crust | Chocolate Couverture | Coconut Meringue
Mint Genoise
- Travelers Cabernet 2022 -

EVENT DETAILS

BOURBON & BITES

3-20-2026 | THE FOREST TENT | COCKTAILS 5:15PM; DINNER 6:15PM

A sponsor-only five-course dinner featuring five distinct expressions of bourbon.

LIQUORS PROVIDED BY:

FourRoses.



BOURBON



HORSE SOLDIER
SINCE 1872

Tito's



Handmade
VODKA
AUSTIN • TEXAS

DINNER BY:



DENNIS VANTERPOOL
EXECUTIVE CHEF



BRITTANY ALLEN
RESTAURANT CHEF



SHULAIKA "SHULI" LA CRUZ
PASTRY SOUS CHEF

WATER PROVIDER



BOURBON & BITES MENU

*Bourbons are Provided by Four Roses and Horse Soldier,
Featured Distilleries of The Lake Oconee Food & Wine Festival, 2026*

SPEAKEASY

Sophisticated Bosc Pear | Pistachio Secrecy | Smoky Gorgonzola
Golden Focaccia | Pomegranate | Pansies | Popcorn Shoots
- Four Roses Bourbon -

CIGAR & ASH TRAY

Lavender Scented Lamb Roll | Firey Citrus Yogurt
Smoked Paprika | Leek Ashes
- Four Roses Bourbon -

BIRD'S NEST

Boysenberry Naked Chicken | Crispy Potato Nest
Pickled Quail Eggs | Tree Top Apple Sauce | Chicory Twigs
- Horse Soldier -

BOATS ON FIRE

Ora King Uramaki | Prime Beef | Salmon Chicharron
Horseradish Creme | Scallion | Chimichurri | Soy Bourbon Glaze
Tableside Bourbon Blaze
- Horse Soldier -

VELVET FILET

Cinnamon Chocolate "Mignon" | Satin Mascarpone Mash
Sweet Vegetables | Black Pepper Chocolate Confit
Sweet Rosemary Butter | Horse Soldier Kissed Demi
- Horse Soldier -

EVENT DETAILS

THE LAUNCH PARTY

3-20-2026 | THE RITZ-CARLTON BALLROOM | 8:00PM - 12:00AM

The "Great Gatsby" Launch Party is a perfect blend of entertainment and sophistication.

ENTERTAINMENT PROVIDED BY:

EMERALD EMPIRE BAND

Based out of Atlanta, the Emerald Empire Band is the Southeast's go-to for high energy live music since 2012. We're talking about pros with serious skills! Band members have shared the stage with legends like Stevie Wonder, Prince, and Aretha Franklin, so they know exactly how to bring the house down.



Whether you're here for the smooth jazz vibes or ready to lose yourself in some funk, soul, and top 40 hits, they've got you covered. Expect the music to feel just right, whether you're chatting over a refreshing drink or ready to live it up on the dance floor.

Grab a cocktail or a glass of wine, find your friends and let's get this party started. Please help us welcome to the stage, the Emerald Empire Band!

PRESENTED BY:

BLACK SHEEP INTERIORS



Black Sheep Interiors takes pride in giving back to the community. At the heart of Black Sheep Interiors is the belief that in order to live, work and play successfully in one's community one must lean into giving back.

EVENT DETAILS

THE LAUNCH PARTY

3-20-2026 | THE RITZ-CARLTON BALLROOM | 8:00PM - 12:00AM

BEVERAGES PROVIDED BY:

BEER

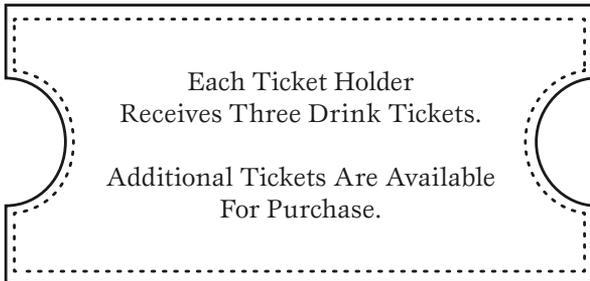
GUINNESS
PERONI
PERONI 0.0
SWEETWATER
TERRAPIN
WHITE CLAW

SPIRITS

CROWN ROYAL
DILLONS
DON JULIO
OLD FORESTER
POST MERIDIEM
TITO'S HANDMADE VODKA

WINE

RENEGADE LEMONADE
RNDC
UNITED DISTRIBUTORS



EVENT DETAILS

THE BREW & QUE

3-21-2026 | THE FOREST TENT | 11:30AM - 2:00PM

Lakeside BBQ smörgåsbord with craft beer and cocktails.

BEVERAGES PROVIDED BY:

BRVAZZI

DILLONS

DON JULIO

EASY HEMP CO.

PERONI

POST MERIDIEM

RENEGADE LEMONADE

TERRAPIN BREWERY

TITO'S HANDMADE VODKA

UNITED DISTRIBUTORS

WHITE CLAW

TIM CADIERE & WASHBOARD ROAD BAND

Tim Cadriere & Washboard Road Band bring an electric vibe to any stage. Their rhythmic set list includes pop, country, rock and blues. There's not much you can throw at Cadriere that he can't play. Tim Cadriere's soulful songs have cajun-country overtones with a dash of creole spunk hailing from his native Louisiana roots.



THE BREW & QUE TASTING MENU

5B'S BBQ & BREWS

Chopped Brisket Taco with Adobo Sauce and
Pulled Pork Taco with Apple Chutney

BRISKETS & BUTTER CUTS:

Lamb Gyro Tacos with Tzatziki Spin

HOLCOMB'S BBQ:

Chopped Pork BBQ Sliders & Brunswick Stew

SAKURA WAGYU FARMS

Wagyu Hot Dogs
Chili N Cheese or Slaw

SOUTHERN BOIL

Crawfish & Shrimp Boil with Potatoes Sausage and Corn

SUGAR CREEK BAKERY

Vanilla Almond Sugar Cookies with Royal Icing, White Chocolate Lemon
Cookies, Assortment of Cakes with Complementing Icing Flavors

THE BURCH:

Liberty Farms Smash Burger with White American Cheese, Grilled Onion,
Tomato, Olive Relish topped with Herb Aioli

THE MEAT LOCKER

BBQ Surprise

EVENT DETAILS

THE MARKET PLACE

3-21-2026 | THE RITZ CARLTON BALLROOM | 10:00AM - 4:00PM

Shop the best of regional artisans and craftsmen.

BLOODY MARYS PROVIDED BY TITOS
PROSECCO PROVIDED BY VIARAE

ACRES & OAK KITCHEN

BEMBRY'S MILL

BRACKISH

BULL & BRIAR

CAMELLIA JEWELS

CHARLOTTE DETIENNE PHOTOGRAPHY

CHOP JERKY

DEER RUN FLORIST

EMILY ANNE DESIGNS

EVERLASTING ADORNMENTS

FAITHWAY CATTLE

GOODSON PECANS

HART SHOP

HAWKART STUDIO

IN MOTION WELLNESS

LADY BELLE

LITTLE LIGHT CO.

MADDOX WOODWORKS

MAKAMAKA LIFESTYLE

MARIA SINE ART

MARBREY MYERS

MONTANA MOON DESIGNS

MORENO CLOTHIERS

MYKE HARRIS-LONG

PIECES BY LESLIE

RARA AVIS OBJECTS

RHINELAND CUTLERY

RIVERWILDE WOOD DESIGNS

SPORTING LTD

SUNSAGE SPORTING DOGS

THE ARTISANS VILLAGE

THE BLUEBIRD POTTERY

THE EVE EFFECT

TINA PERRY ART

ZAMMS

EVENT DETAILS

THE WELLNESS STATION

3-20-2026 - 3-22-2026 | AT THE DIRECTOR'S ROOM

FRIDAY, SATURDAY 1:00PM - 4:00PM | SUNDAY 8:00AM - 12:00PM

Feel Your Best, Party Your Best!

Treat your mind and body well while enjoying the festival! IV Wellness Solutions provides a comprehensive infusion treatment that will keep you feeling your best as you enjoy all the goodies the festival has to offer.

Each 1-hour session is limited to six people. Choose from an all-inclusive package and select the add-ons you prefer including: Toradol Headache Relief, Zofran and B12 Energy Boost. Sessions are one hour long and are reserved on a first-come, first-serve basis.

THE RIDE & DRIVE

3-21-2026 | THE FRONT DRIVE | 9:00AM - 2:00PM

Get behind the wheel of the most luxurious driving machines.



This exclusive event showcases some of the hottest cars on the road today! Representatives from MotorCars of Atlanta will be on-hand to demonstrate the features & appointments behind these legendary and beautifully designed vehicles. Attendance is limited! Drivers must provide valid insurance and drivers license.

TEST DRIVE:



2026 MCLAREN ARTURA



MCLAREN 750S

EVENT DETAILS

THE PRIVATE WINE TASTING

3-21-2026 | THE REYNOLDS BALLROOM | 3:00 - 4:30PM

An intimate learning experience with wine. Featuring select wines from Skipstone Wines and Sphaerics Winery.



Presenter: Brian Ball, General Manager at Skipstone Wines and Owner of Sphaerics Winery

Host: The Oconee Cellar

Brian Ball will guide guests through the flavors and nuances behind an astounding collection of highly rated wines.

Brian's passion for wine began during college, working in fine dining restaurants. After a brief stint on Wall Street,

Brian pursued his dream of working in the wine industry. He is thrilled to be working at Skipstone after first falling in love with the wines years ago.

Brian's experience in the wine industry began in 2010 when he began travelling the world working with winemakers in Napa, Sonoma, Australia and New Zealand to learn the craft of winemaking. To further his education, Brian studied at UC Davis, where he earned a second degree in Viticulture and Enology and attended the Wine Executive Program. After UC Davis, Brian ran the wine program at Ma(i)sonry Napa Valley, where he first discovered Skipstone and was struck by the extraordinary character of the wines, vineyard, and brand.

With over a decade of service providing fine wines and spirits, The Oconee Cellar's team has earned a significant degree of knowledge that their clientele has learned to trust.

WINES PROVIDED BY:

.....
SPHAERICS

SKIPSTONE

EVENT DETAILS

THE GRAND TASTING

3-21-2026 | FESTIVAL VENUE | 6:00 - 9:00PM

The centerpiece of The Lake Oconee Food & Wine Festival.

BEER, WINE & SPIRITS PROVIDED BY THESE PATRONS

Enjoy over 200 selections of delectable wines, beers and spirits from global, national and regional vintners, breweries & distributors.

AS ONE CRU	LILY BO LAVENDER VODKA
BENZIGER	THE LONG DRINK
THE BOTANIST GIN	MARTIS WINE CO
BRAVAZZI	MASO CANALI
CIROC	MEIOMI
CLOS DU VAL	MOUNT GAY RUM
COOPER & THIEF	OCONEE BEVERAGE
DAOU WINERY	ORIN SWIFT
DEEP EDDY VODKA	PERNOD-RICARD
DIAGEO SPIRITS	PERONI
DILLONS	POST MERIDIEM
DISTILLERY OF MODERN ART	PRATI
DO EPIC SH*T	PRECEPT WINE & SPIRITS
DON JULIO	PROCERA GIN
DUCKHORN VINEYARDS	PROXIMO
E&J GALLO	RNDC SPIRITS
EMPIRE DISTRIBUTORS	RODNEY STRONG WINE ESTATES
FIRETREE	ROMBAUER
FOUR ROSES	SINEGAL ESTATE
FRAICHE WINE GROUP	SKREWBALL PEANUT BUTTER
FROG'S LEAP WINERY	WHISKEY
GALLO	SWEETWATER
GUINNESS	TERRAPIN
GUNDLACH BUNDSCHU	THE WINE GROUP
HORSE SOLDIER	TITO'S HANDMADE VODKA
IMAGERY	TRIBUTE
J VINEYARDS	WHITE CLAW
J. LOHR VINEYARDS & WINERY	WHITEHAVEN
JEFFERSON BOURBON	THE WIMBERLEY COLLECTION
LA MARCA	ZD WINES

EVENT DETAILS

THE GRAND TASTING

3-21-2026 | FESTIVAL VENUE | 6:00PM - 9:00PM

THOMAS ARVID



AMERICA'S PREEMINENT PAINTER OF WINE

A self-taught artist, Thomas Arvid has focused on the subject of wine for over 15 years. Arvid recently completed his first museum exhibition and has been featured in USA Today, LA Times, Wine Spectator and named "one of 50 artists you should know" by US Art Magazine. His original and limited edition works reside in homes on every continent.

Thomas Arvid will have brush and canvas in-hand painting live at The Grand Tasting. As if the over 200 wines aren't enough to whet your palate, Arvid's paintings will tantalize your taste buds with vivid depictions that subtly remind us of the sublime experiences had while sharing good wine with loved ones and friends.

MEL WASHINGTON



CLASSIC WITH A MODERN TWIST

Hailing from Charleston, SC, Mel blends gospel roots with soulful Americana grit and folk storytelling. Whether it's a stripped-down acoustic set in a dive bar or a full-band Sunday revival at a beachside venue, Mel's music cuts through the noise and speaks to the spirit.

A former member of touring rock outfit, "All Get Out" Mel found his solo voice in the tension between faith and doubt, beauty and brokenness — all sung with the weight of someone who's lived it.

His latest album, *Feast or Famine*, weaves tales of redemption, heartbreak, and the Carolina coast with raw warmth and unshakable conviction.

Catch him live. Bring your heart. Leave different.

EVENT DETAILS

THE GRAND TASTING

3-21-2026 | FESTIVAL VENUE | 6:00PM - 9:00PM

THE CHARITY AUCTION



Browse over 100 silent auction items ranging from golf packages, weekend getaways, wine, art, home & garden accessories, handcrafted items, gift baskets, certificates and more.

Proceeds from the Lake Oconee Food & Wine Festival auction are donated to support children's programs and academic enrichment at Baldwin-

Putnam Young Life, Gatewood Schools, Georgia Writers Museum, Putnam Reads, Pete Nance Boys and Girls Club, Spencer Bradley Foundation, The Plaza Arts Center, and The Victory Train.

NAPA & SONOMA TAKE OVER INSTA-BUY

You are invited to enjoy Napa and Sonoma Valleys at an unhurried, indulgent pace — where exceptional wines, inspired cuisine, and iconic settings come together seamlessly.

Each experience has been carefully selected to showcase the artistry, heritage, and craftsmanship that define this remarkable region.

This is the first Lake Oconee Food and Wine Festival excursion to Napa and Sonoma and it is not to be missed.



E&J. Gallo Winery

Tasting experiences to include Rombauer, Orin Swift, Pahlmeyer, Louis M. Martini, and J Vineyards.

Every detail of this experience has been selected with intention, allowing you to relax, savor, and feel truly welcomed. We hope this journey leaves you feeling celebrated, inspired, and deeply appreciated — long after the final toast.

This once in a lifetime, curated, bespoke, guided behind the scenes, all access tour of Napa and Sonoma is only available as an insta-buy purchase through the auction portal.

THE GRAND TASTING MENU

CAFÉ 44

Presented by Chef Lane Raney

Meatball Sliders with Garlic Aioli & Brie Cheese

Mini Raspberry Shortbread Cookies with White Chocolate and Raspberry Jelly

AMORE DEL LAGO

RITZ-CARLTON REYNOLDS, LAKE OCONEE

Presented by Chef Marcus Davis

House-Made Parmesan Gnocchi

Pillowy House-Made Gnocchi Tossed in Rich Vodka Sauce

Shaved Parmigiano Reggiano Chive Gremolata

Parsley Oil

LINGER LONGER STEAK HOUSE

RITZ-CARLTON REYNOLDS, LAKE OCONEE

Presented by Chef Alison Stern

Grass Fed Beef Sliders on Brioche

Sundried Tomato Jam

Smoked Confit Garlic Aioli

Chef's Accoutrements on a Skewer Served with House Made Truffle

Parmesan Potato Chips

MERCI BEAUCOUP CAKES

Presented by Executive Pastry Chef Reva Alexander-Hawk

Champagne Cake

JW MARRIOTT NASHVILLE

Presented By Chef Daniel Mangione

Luxury Vanilla Bean Soft Serve Bar

Toppings: Peach Compote | Goopy Pecans | Brown Sugar Caramel | Hazelnut

Cookie | Dark Chocolate Sauce | Cherry | Roasted Peanuts | Sprinkles

Strawberries | Chocolate Pearls | Oreo Pieces

THE GRAND TASTING MENU

KERSEY CATERING

Presented by Chef Lamar Kersey

Cola Collard Greens, Polenta Cakes with Roasted Garlic Onion Jam and Truffle Goat Cheese

Old Bay Shrimp Shooter with Smoked Pork Belly

MACARONS BY DEBORAH

Presented by Chef Deborah Johnson

Savory Beet Macaron with Goat Cheese and Walnut Crunch

Mini Ispahan Macarons with Chantilly, Rose and Raspberry flavors

Kir Royal Macaron

Espresso Martini Macaron

METROPOLIS CAFE, LAKE OCONEE

Chicken, Steak & Lamb Kabobs with Pita & Hummus

PERRY LANE HOTEL

Lamb Loli Pop with Mint Pesto

Quinoa Greek Salad with a Red Wine Vinaigrette

SAKURA WAGYU FARMS

Wagyu Hot Dogs

Chili N Cheese or Slaw

SCRATCHERS CREEK MARKET

Presented by Jeff Kent, Pit Master

In Partnership with Sakura Wagyu, Emberhaus, Fireside

Wagyu Brisket & Ground Wagyu Sliders

Salmon with Honey & Candied Jalapeños

Oysters on the Half Shell

TABLE AT THE LAKE

Presented by Chef Casey Burchfield

Grilled Liberty Farms Lamb

Spring Succotash Relish

Herb Aioli

BRUNCHISSIMO

3-22-2026 | AMORE DEL LAGO | 11:00AM - 3:00PM

An expansive gourmet brunch at Amore del Lago.



BRUNCH BY:



MARCUS DAVIS
RESTAURANT CHEF

NO TICKETS REQUIRED

LAKE OCONEE

& FOOD
WINE

FESTIVAL

2026

*Meet the
Festival Chefs*

FESTIVAL CHEFS



Reva Alexander-Hawk
Chef & Owner
Merci Beaucoup Cakes Eatonton, GA
At The Grand Tasting

Upon launching Merci Beaucoup, a cake and pastry business, Reva rapidly achieved a reputation for creating innovative and tantalizing confections. This stellar reputation led to appearances on top-rated television shows and media coverage in national publications.

Reva has appeared on WEtv, E! Entertainment Network, Food Network UK, Style Network and Duff Goldman's series Duff till Dawn. She is a two-time winner of Food Network's Cake Wars and is a Food Network Wedding Cake Champion, Halloween Wars Champion, two-time Big Cake Champion and has participated in 3 seasons of Amazing Wedding Cakes. Reva has been featured in an extensive list of magazines and tradeshow.

Reva's never-ending pursuit of excellence has led her to tackle new challenges that include expanding her operations to the East coast, developing a book, a web series on TikTok and sharing her decades of insights and knowledge through teaching the craft of baking.



Brittany Allen
Restaurant Chef
The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee
At The Bourbon & Bites Dinner

Brittany Allen is an inspired and dynamic culinary professional whose passion for hospitality shines through every dish she creates. With more than a decade of experience across luxury hotels, destination resorts, and refined dining, she brings a thoughtful, guest-centered approach to her newly appointed role as Restaurant Chef of Gaby's by the Lake at The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee. Since joining the resort in 2023, Chef Brittany has become known for her creativity, calm leadership style, and unwavering commitment to quality. Whether collaborating with fellow chefs, mentoring rising culinarians, or curating memorable dining moments, she elevates each experience through her energy, precision, and genuine love for the craft. Her culinary journey includes impactful roles at the Eden Roc Nobu Hotel in Miami Beach, Firebirds Wood Fire Grill, Brio Tuscan Grille, and several distinguished private clubs. Throughout her career, she has developed a reputation for blending bold, globally influenced flavors with the warmth and comfort of Southern hospitality, a hallmark that resonates beautifully

FESTIVAL CHEFS

with the lakeside lifestyle of Lake Oconee. A graduate of Johnson & Wales University, Chef Brittany pairs her classical training with a modern, intuitive approach to flavor. She excels in menu development, operational organization, and fostering collaboration, uplifting kitchen cultures where creativity and teamwork thrive. In her new role at Gaby's, Chef Brittany is excited to embrace the fresh, relaxed spirit of lakeside dining while infusing it with her own heritage. She brings the soulful flavors of the American South together with vibrant Caribbean influences drawn from her family roots stretching across South Florida to the beautiful islands of the Dominican Republic and Haiti. This unique culinary perspective inspires dishes that are bright, welcoming, and full of heart, celebrating both her personal story and the diverse flavors that shaped her. Chef Brittany's vision for Gaby's by the Lake blends seasonal ingredients, approachable yet elevated flavors, and an inviting sense of place, all grounded in the service excellence of The Ritz-Carlton.



Jon Altizer-Bieger
Co-Owner & Managing Partner
The Burch & Table at the Lake
Lake Oconee

At The Brew & Que, The Grand Tasting

Jon is the Co-Owner & Managing partner of Table at the Lake; a chef-driven restaurant with a killer

beverage program.

Jon was born and raised in Southwestern Virginia where his love of both food and service became integral to his identity. He spent many hours alongside his maternal grandmother and mother in their home kitchens learning the many secrets of family recipes. In this environment he learned that food simply tastes better when it is made with both love and purpose. It was in these formative moments that Jon's passion for food began.

Jon relocated from Chicago in 2020 and began working on the concept and business plan for Table at the Lake in January 2021 alongside his co-owner, Executive Chef, and more importantly friend, Casey Burchfield.



Luke Askew
Owner
Holcombs Bar-B-Que
Greensboro, GA
At The Brew & Que

Luke was born and raised in Greene County, where he grew up around his family's restaurant

FESTIVAL CHEFS

and developed a passion for good BBQ. From a young age, he knew he wanted to be a part of Holcomb's BBQ, a business that was started over 50 years ago in White Plains, GA by his grandparents, David and Grace Holcomb. With a second location in downtown Greensboro, Holcomb's has become a staple in the community, known for its delicious BBQ recipes passed down through generations. Luke is honored to carry on his family's tradition and looks forward to creating more nostalgic memories for customers to cherish for years to come.



Miguel Bautista
Executive Chef | Perry Lane Hotel
Savannah, GA

At The Grand Tasting

Miguel Bautista's passion for cooking began during lively family gatherings and traditional asados while growing up in Miami. What started as an unexpected job as a food runner soon evolved into a deeper calling, setting him on a path through a wide range of culinary experiences.

Over the years, Bautista has worked in diverse kitchens that helped shape his perspective as a chef, from a Jewish kosher restaurant to helping open a coastal European concept and serving as a private chef. His culinary journey also brought him to a renowned Japanese restaurant under Chef Makoto, a former sous chef to Chef Morimoto, where he developed a deep respect for precision, discipline, and the craft behind exceptional cuisine.

Bautista joined Perry Lane Hotel in 2022 as Chef de Cuisine, drawn by both professional connections and Savannah's vibrant culinary community. Now serving as Executive Chef, he leads the hotel's culinary program with a philosophy rooted in curiosity, collaboration, and a respect for ingredients.

At Emporium Kitchen & Wine Market, Bautista's approach reflects the spirit of the restaurant itself, honoring Southern traditions while drawing inspiration from global techniques and flavors. Through close relationships with local purveyors and a passion for thoughtful hospitality, he continues to shape dining experiences that feel both familiar and unexpected.



Kent & Jenny Bonner
Pitmasters | 5B's BBQ & Brews
Greensboro, GA

At The Brew & Que

Here at 5B, our daily goal is to create, serve and enjoy fine food that takes elevated BBQ to the next

FESTIVAL CHEFS

level and daily specials with an ethnic flare that will delightfully surprise you. We serve Texas Style BBQ and also great food that's in season, food from around the globe and food that's distinctly different. Every morning before opening the 5B kitchen, we stock our shelves with market fresh ingredients, so that the food we serve you is as fresh and flavorful as can be. And don't forget the cocktails. We love a great beer or a Rum that's been partnered and mixed to perfection!



Casey Burchfield
Chef & Owner | The Burch & Table at the Lake
Lake Oconee

At The Brew & Que, The Grand Tasting

Casey moved to Lake Oconee in 2014 where he found his wife Morgan, forever home and three adopted dogs, Kota, Skye & Todd. He has an extensive background in the culinary world and has most recently worked with Wolfgang Puck and other local luxury resorts. During the pandemic he quickly realized he could expand his talents by sharing culinary creations with the community and therefore The Burch was created! The brand started as a provisional sales small business and small catering gig specializing in seasoning and hot sauce creations. In 2021 the brand exploded into a full time Private Chef experience in the Lake Oconee area. Fast forward to May 2022, The Burch has now expanded into a full service food truck at Oconee Brewing Company in Greensboro, GA. Casey has most recently launched an upscale dining and craft cocktail restaurant, Table at the Lake! With hard work, dedication and support from friends & family near and far, the goal is to continue to expand The Burch for years to come.



Robert Butts
Chef | Auburn Angel
Atlanta, GA

At The Grand Tasting

With a reputation for blending technique and creativity, Chef Robert Butts has carved a space for himself in Atlanta's evolving food scene. Formerly the executive chef at Twisted Soul Cookhouse & Pours, his cuisine is a reflection of rich Southern traditions infused with eclectic global influences. Passionate about precision and storytelling through food, he brings an elevated yet soulful perspective to Auburn Angel's menu, ensuring each dish is both artful and unforgettable.

FESTIVAL CHEFS



Blair Christophe Davis
Garde Manger Chef
The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee
At The Vintner Dinner

Chef Blair Christophe Davis is a seasoned culinary leader with more than 12 years of luxury hospitality experience, distinguished by her longstanding tenure with The Ritz-Carlton. Recognized for her operational excellence, refined culinary technique, and strong people-centered leadership style, she consistently delivers exceptional dining experiences across high-volume, fine-dining, and banquet environments. A native of New Orleans, Louisiana, Chef Blair's culinary perspective is deeply influenced by the flavors, heritage, and culture of her hometown. After initially pursuing a career in the medical field, she discovered her passion for cooking and graduated with honors from Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Atlanta. Her formal training in classical technique, global cuisines, sauce work, meat fabrication, menu planning, and cost management continues to guide her disciplined approach to kitchen leadership. Chef Blair currently serves as the Garde Manger Chef at The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee, where she oversees all cold-kitchen culinary operations for luxury weddings, corporate events, and high-profile functions. Her previous roles within the resort include Restaurant Chef for Amore del Lago and Gaby's, Sous Chef, and Garde Manger Supervisor. She began her Ritz-Carlton career in Atlanta, where she advanced through the culinary ranks and served as a Learning Coach, training emerging culinary talent and supporting the brand's legendary standards.

Her broader experience includes culinary work with Holland America—Princess at the Denali Wilderness Lodge in Alaska and fine-dining roles within the Buckhead Life Restaurant Group. Chef Blair holds certifications from ServSafe and the National Environmental Health Association and remains active in professional and community outreach, contributing to events such as Taste of Atlanta, the GRACE Awards, and programming for the Georgia Governor's Mansion. Rooted in tradition and shaped by a career in luxury hospitality, Chef Blair Christophe Davis brings a refined, disciplined, and guest-focused philosophy to every kitchen she leads, continually elevating the resort dining experience through creativity, authenticity, and uncompromising culinary excellence.

FESTIVAL CHEFS



Marcus Davis
Restaurant Chef | Amore del Lago
Greensboro, GA
At The Grand Tasting

From the first day Amore del Lago opened its doors, Chef Marcus has been at the heart of our cucina, steady in his guidance, a quiet maestro shaping the rhythm of our kitchen, and a guardian of the Italian spirit we celebrate in every dish.

Marcus's culinary journey began long before he stepped into leadership here. He built his foundation inside some of Florida's most respected kitchens, each one adding another layer of depth, discipline, and craft to the chef he would become. At Marker 32, he sharpened his technique; at Seahorse Grill within the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, he deepened his understanding of coastal flavors; and at Jacksonville Golf & Country Club, he found his stride as a professional. His time at Salt, one of Florida's only AAA Five Diamond restaurants, refined his standards for precision and luxury. Later, at Lilac in Tampa, a one-Michelin-star restaurant, Marcus rose to the role of Lead Cook and Supervisor, an experience that strengthened both his palate and his leadership.

But it is here, at Amore Del Lago, where Marcus's story truly comes alive. Since day one, he has been the backbone of our kitchen as Sous Chef, calm in the busiest moments, unwavering in his commitment to excellence, and deeply trusted by his team. He cooks with the soul of an Italian Nonna and the discipline of a modern craftsman, always striving to honor the heritage behind each dish while elevating it with technique and finesse. Marcus embodies the balance of tradition and innovation that defines the heart of Italian cuisine. With every plate, he brings a sense of warmth, intention, and quiet pride, the kind of cooking that makes guests feel not just satisfied but cared for.

FESTIVAL CHEFS



Michael Gaddy
Executive Pastry Chef | The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds,
Lake Oconee

At The Vintner Dinner

Michael Gaddy serves as a Pastry Chef for The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee, where he oversees the pastry operations and menu creation across the resort.

Born in Dade City, Florida, Chef Michael Gaddy's love for pastries began at the early age of 10 when he started baking cakes and pies with his mother. His passion truly sparked at age 17, when he won Dade City's Kumquat Festival with a decadent strawberry French vanilla cake. In 2010, Chef Michael earned the position of Pastry Prep Cook at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, and continued as an Overnight Baker for the Orlando World Center Marriott. By 2012, he held the title of Pastry Lead Baker, and in 2014, he was crowned with the title of Outlet Pastry Supervisor, where he created plated desserts for all six outlets of the 2,200-room hotel. In 2015, Chef Gaddy became the Pastry Supervisor for banquets, charged with the task of plating for events with up to 5,000 attendees.

Along his journey, Chef Michael has traveled to Zürich, Switzerland, Rye, New York, Miami, Florida, Nassau, Bahamas, Atlanta, Georgia, Chicago, Illinois, and many other cities, crafting pastries and learning new techniques to further his career. One thing remains consistent through all his travels: his Caribbean roots and whimsical spirit shine through all of his creations.



Deborah Johnson
Private Chef, Owner | Macrons by Deborah
Eatonton, GA

At The Grand Tasting

After marrying a Frenchman, Deborah moved to France for nearly two decades, becoming "French, For A While." Deborah studied cuisine, pastry and oenology at Le Cordon Bleu, Paris where she became the translator/interpreter and assistant for Cordon Bleu's top chefs. She is a specialist in French cuisine and is a personal & private chef offering culinary and gourmet walking tours of Paris and France. Deborah relocated to the Greater Atlanta area to be closer to family and now shares her culinary talents and passion for everything French.

FESTIVAL CHEFS



David Kalpak
Chef & Owner | Briskets & Butter Cuts
Lake Oconee, GA
At The Brew & Que

Former professional golfer and PGA/Kornferry Tour Caddie turned barbecue specialist, David Kalpak brings together his two favorite loves with the creation of Briskets & Butter Cuts. While traveling the world on golf tours, food (especially BBQ) was a priority at every stop for David. It was during this time that Chef Kalpak fell in love with the art of barbecuing. He has pursued his passion for crafting delectable barbecue for the last five years, satisfying many appetites and patrons of Briskets & Butter Cuts!



Sakura Wagyu Farms
Lamar Kersey, Chef
Westerville, OH
At The Grand Tasting

Sakura Wagyu Farms started with a simple conversation at a 2014 cattle meeting in Ohio. A group of experts in genetics, nutrition, and ranching realized they could do something special by pairing the rich tradition of Japanese Wagyu with the heart of American farming. The result isn't just a beef company, it's a passion project dedicated to creating a holistic model that supports local farmers and their communities.

The name Sakura, meaning cherry blossom, is a nod to the breed's deep Japanese roots. Centuries ago, Wagyu were bred for the incredible marbling and flavor that make them famous today. At Sakura Wagyu Farms, the team honors that history by meticulously crossing Wagyu with Angus, focusing on a specialized feeding and care process that coaxes out the best possible texture. For Sakura, the work goes beyond the pasture. They've become educators in the industry, teaching partners and home cooks alike how this exceptional beef can transform a simple dinner into a memorable event. By blending centuries-old traditions with modern American craftsmanship, they make sure every cut brings people together over a truly elevated meal.



Kersey Catering
At The Grand Tasting

Chef and Owner Lamar Kersey is originally from Eatonton and now resides in Madison Georgia. He has worked in the food industry for 25 years and received his culinary degree from Johnson and Wales University. He has a passion for good food and has

FESTIVAL CHEFS

catered many local events and weddings which has left the Lake Area buzzing about his delicious food and amazing talent.



Shulaika "Shuli" La Cruz

Pastry Sous Chef

The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee

At The Bourbon & Bites Dinner

Born and raised on the vibrant island of Curaçao in the Dutch Caribbean, Chef Shulaika "Shuli" La Cruz discovered her passion for pastry at a young age.

Some of her earliest and most cherished memories come from gathering ingredients in the family kitchen and joyfully waking her mother so they could bake together. Those foundational moments sparked a lifelong love for creativity, comfort, and connection through desserts.

A devoted pet mom, Shuli shares her life with her cats Simon, Savannah, and Gwen, and her dog Hatshe, and she generously volunteers her time at the Humane Society.

Chef Shuli brings a wealth of experience to The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee. Her career with the brand includes celebrated properties such as The Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City in Virginia, and The Ritz-Carlton Orlando, Grande Lakes, as well as time at the World Trade Center in New York. She first arrived in Lake Oconee in 2015 on Task Force from The Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead to support the Pastry team during the Masters Tournament and immediately fell in love with the property, the lake, and the community.

After the closure of The Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead in 2017, Shuli transferred to The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee full-time, continuing to rise through the ranks with grace and determination. She has served as Cook I, Learning Coach, Specialty Cook, and Chef Tournant, each role shaping her into the thoughtful leader and talented pastry chef she is today. Now, as our Pastry Sous Chef, she continues to inspire those around her with her creativity, courage, dedication, and unwavering commitment to excellence.



Daniel Mangione

Executive Pastry Chef | JW Marriott

Nashville, TN

At The Grand Tasting

Chef Daniel Mangione's 23-year career has been defined by a relentless curiosity and a knack for creating "wow" moments out of flour and sugar.

Currently the Executive Pastry Chef at the JW Marriott Nashville, Daniel has spent over two decades as a standout leader within the

FESTIVAL CHEFS

Marriott and Ritz-Carlton families. A California native and Culinary Institute of America graduate, Daniel's journey has been nothing short of global. From managing pastry operations at Bvlgari Resorts in Bali to opening 22 hotels in iconic spots like Rome, Aruba, and St. Thomas, he's as comfortable with high-volume luxury as he is with intricate chocolate artistry. He is perhaps most famous for his large-scale holiday masterpieces, like Nashville's fully operational "Whiskey Wonderland" gingerbread bar and the 18-foot tall gingerbread chalet at The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain.

When he isn't shaping the future of pastry on Marriott's Pastry Chef Council, Daniel is known for his creative attention to detail, whether he's appearing on the Today Show or winning the Ultimate Wedding Cake Challenge. For Daniel, pastry isn't just about dessert, it's about setting a new standard for the guest experience, one sugar-spun creation at a time.



Jestina Pambu

Banquet Chef

The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee
At The Vintner Dinner

Chef Jestina Pambu is a seasoned culinary leader with more than 15 years of experience within The Ritz-Carlton brand, known for her passion for food, meticulous attention to detail, and unwavering commitment to excellence. Currently serving as Banquet Chef at The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee, a role she proudly stepped into following her promotion two years ago, Chef Jestina oversees large-scale culinary operations with creativity, precision, and a genuine love for hospitality. A graduate of Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Atlanta, Chef Jestina began her journey with The Ritz-Carlton in 2010 at AG Restaurant in Atlanta. She rose steadily through the ranks from Cook III to Cook I, becoming both a Learning Coach and a trusted leader on the line. Her drive and culinary talent led to her promotion to Garde Manger Supervisor, where she managed Club Level presentations, hotel amenities, inventory, HACCP compliance, and a team of skilled cooks. Her exceptional performance earned her the prestigious 5-Star Employee of the Year Award in 2017. In 2019, Chef Jestina joined The Ritz-Carlton St. Thomas, taking on the role of Banquet Senior Supervisor and later Acting Banquet Sous Chef. There, she played a key role in the reopening of the fully renovated \$140 million resort, overseeing multiple culinary areas, including Banquets, Garde Manger, Employee Dining Room, Club Level, Butcher Shop, and the resort's

FESTIVAL CHEFS

two luxury catamarans. Her leadership contributed to 40% of the resort's Food & Beverage revenue, contributing to the hotel being recognized as the "Most Recommended Luxury Hotel in the USVI" by Travel + Leisure in 2021. Since joining The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee in 2021, Chef Jestina has continued to elevate the banquet experience through innovative menus, exceptional amenities, and a commitment to shaping strong, high-performing culinary teams. She partners closely with Meetings & Events, Food & Beverage leadership, and operational teams to execute high-profile events, ensure flawless coordination, and drive culinary excellence across the resort's banquet operations. She also leads the resort's Club Level culinary program and oversees the hotel amenity program with creativity and care. Known for her dedication to training and developing talent, Chef Jestina leads a banquet team of more than 10 cooks, fostering an environment rooted in mentorship, high standards, and continuous improvement. Her leadership style combines grace, resilience, and the Ritz-Carlton Gold Standards she has lived for more than a decade. Outside the kitchen, Chef Jestina is a marathon runner, an avid kitchen gardener, and an active community volunteer, including work with the Atlanta Community Food Bank. Her passion for growth, innovation, and service continues to inspire both her team and the guests she serves.



Lane Raney
Chef and Owner | Café 44
Greensboro, GA
At The Grand Tasting

Located at beautiful Lake Oconee, Café 44 is a local spot for fast, high-quality favorites. Café 44 offers a variety of homemade breakfasts, pastries, soups, sandwiches, family meals and artisan coffee roasted fresh in Thomasville, Georgia. They can also provide after-hours catering for delicious and easy meal solutions.

Looking for a quick and delicious meal? Try one of their savory salads or sandwiches. Did you know, the California Club was voted one of the best 100 meals in Georgia!



Alison Stern
Sous Chef | Linger Longer Steak House
Lake Oconee
At The Grand Tasting

Sous Chef Alison Stern brings a genuine passion for food, hospitality, and heartfelt cooking to the kitchen at Linger Longer Steakhouse. With her calm

FESTIVAL CHEFS

confidence and vibrant culinary spirit, Alison helps create the warm, elevated dining experience that guests have come to love. She believes that every dish tells a story, and she works each day to make sure guests feel that way in every bite. Alison's culinary path has taken her from the coastal flavors of Portland, Maine, to the bustling restaurant scene of Boston, where she cooked in celebrated hotels and refined her attention to detail, creativity, and consistency.

As Sous Chef at Cambria Hotel Portland and Lead Chef at The Inn at Diamond Cove, she crafted menus for weddings, intimate dinners, and special retreats, always bringing a thoughtful touch that made guests feel welcomed and well cared for. Whether preparing a rustic, comforting dish or something polished and contemporary, Alison's focus has always been the same: flavor, balance, and genuine hospitality.

A graduate of Boston University's Culinary Arts Program and a ServSafe Manager, Alison blends solid culinary technique with her instinct for warm, guest-centered service. She also holds a degree from Georgetown University, reflecting the broad curiosity and global perspective that influence her approach to ingredients and inspiration. At Linger Longer Steakhouse, Alison is proud to help carry forward a tradition of Southern charm and exceptional dining. Guests can see her dedication in thoughtful seasonal flavors, the precision of the steakhouse's signature dishes, and the positive energy she brings to the kitchen every day. Her goal is simple yet meaningful: to make every guest's visit feel special, memorable, and delicious.



Scratchers Creek Market Greensboro, GA The Grand Tasting

The Scratchers Creek family has been involved in farming for generations, and have a deep understanding and appreciation for the importance of quality and sustainability. Scratchers Creek Market offers a wide range of high-quality fish and meat products, including fresh salmon, tuna, and halibut, as well as locally raised beef and lamb along with natural chickens, turkeys, and Cheshire Pork.

FESTIVAL CHEFS



Dennis Vanterpool

Executive Chef

The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee

At The Vintner Dinner, The Bourbon & Bites Dinner

Executive Chef Dennis Vanterpool was born and raised in the vibrant hills and beaches of St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands, where the aromas of home-cooked meals and the

warmth of Caribbean hospitality shaped his earliest memories. Inspired by his mother, who spent a decade at The Ritz-Carlton, St. Thomas before opening and running her own restaurant, he discovered his passion for cooking. Dennis grew up surrounded by the flavors, rhythms, and soulful traditions of island cooking. Watching his mother command the kitchen with grace and passion ignited his own love for the culinary arts. By his teenage years, he had created a signature pizza that quickly became a local favorite, a small but telling glimpse into the chef he would one day become. Determined to turn his passion into purpose, Dennis pursued formal training at Johnson & Wales University, where he refined his craft and deepened his appreciation for global cuisine. After graduating, he returned home to begin his professional career at the Marriott Frenchman's Reef, laying the foundation for what would become an inspiring culinary journey. Eager to grow beyond the island and expand his horizons, Dennis later joined The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island as the Garde Manger Chef. His commitment to excellence, natural leadership, and creative drive earned him multiple promotions, including Chef Tournant and eventually Executive Sous Chef. His time on Amelia Island was not only marked by professional achievements but also by meaningful community engagement, teaching cooking classes for the Boys & Girls Club, supporting the Barnabas Food Pantry, and volunteering at a local soup kitchen. These experiences reinforced his belief that food does far more than nourish; it connects, uplifts, and builds community.

After eight and a half years of growth, service, and mentorship at Amelia Island, Dennis took the next step in his career as Executive Chef at The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee, a moment he describes as a long-held dream realized. Life on the lake has become a source of inspiration for this deep-rooted Island chef, blending the tranquility of Georgia's natural beauty with the vibrant soul of his Caribbean heritage. Today, Chef Dennis leads the culinary vision at The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee with warmth, creativity, and purpose. He infuses each dining experience with a harmonious balance of island soul and global influence, highlighting fresh, seasonal ingredients and celebrating the stories of local farmers, artisans, and purveyors. Dennis approaches every moment with intention and heart. Chef Dennis brings heritage, innovation, and genuine hospitality to the forefront of his cuisine, transforming simple ingredients into unforgettable stories and creating lasting memories for every guest he serves.

FESTIVAL CHEFS

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A SINCERE THANK YOU!

The Festival Committee would like to extend a special thanks to all the friends of the festival and especially the support of the following people: Thomas and Vanessa Arvid for their years of dedication and generosity; Black Sheep Interiors for always making us “up our game;” Kent and Cindy Duffey and Designs by Kent for the beautiful floral arrangements throughout the festival and, most importantly, Ralph L. Vick, General Manager and Morgan (Evans) Burchfield, Associate Director of Meetings & Special Events at The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee.

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