CANADIAN CULINARY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Canada's top chefs get cooking in Kelowna this weekend

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STAFF REPORTER

Foodies have one golden opportunity left to catch some of the best chefs in the country in action this weekend.

The grand finalé competition at the Gold Medal Plates' Canadian Culinary Championships runs Saturday evening at the Delta Grand Okanagan and tickets are still available.

"For the winner, it's certainly a feather in their cap," said Judy Burns, spokeswoman for the Canadian Culinary Championships.

In order to get to the competition, the eight chefs involved have already had to win a city-wide Golden Medal Plate face-off against other chefs from their region, which challenges a chef's wine pairing ability, menu selection, frugality and presentation. Winning a seat at the national table, so to speak, shows a chef is at the top of his or her game and should bring dinner guests and new opportunities through the door regardless of the outcome.

As an example, Burns said she's aware the chef from Saskatoon, Dan Walker, is already booked solid, thanks to his first win in Saskatchewan, with everything from guest cooking spots to speaking engagements on his agenda.

Tickets are sold out for a Friday night Mystery Wine Dinner, in which the chefs must cook a feast for 300 on a limited budget to pair with a mystery wine presented to them Thursday evening, and the Saturday morning competition, in which they cook from a limited group of ingredients given to them in a black box.

Results from those events will factor into the final decision, which will be delivered by Olympians Adam Kreek (rowing 2008) and Maelle Ricker (snowboard 2010) Saturday evening.

The chefs each come into Saturday's competition working with a winery whose wine they have already won a level of competition with.

Gold Medal Plates is billed as the ultimate celebration of Canadian excellence in cuisine, wine, entertainment and athletic achievement. Celebrating in eight cities across Canada in 2011, Gold Medal Plates features top wines and the premier chefs in each city, paired with Canadian Olympic and Paralympic athletes, in a competition to crown a gold, silver and bronze medal culinary team, initially in each city.

The Kelowna competition is considered the nationwide finalé or the Canadian Culinary Championships.

Tickets are available online at www.goldmedalplates.com.

The chefs who will compete in Kelowna are Martin Juneau, of Newtown Restaurant in Vancouver; Andrew Fung, of Blackhawk Golf Club in Edmonton; Dan Walker of Weczeria Food in Saskatchewan; Robert Clark from C Restaurant in Vancouver; Calgary chef Duncan Ly from the Hotel Arts; Ottawa chef Michael Moffat from Beckta Dining and Wine; Frank Dodd of Hillebrand Winery Restaurant in Niagara and St. John's chef Jeremy Charles from Raymonds.

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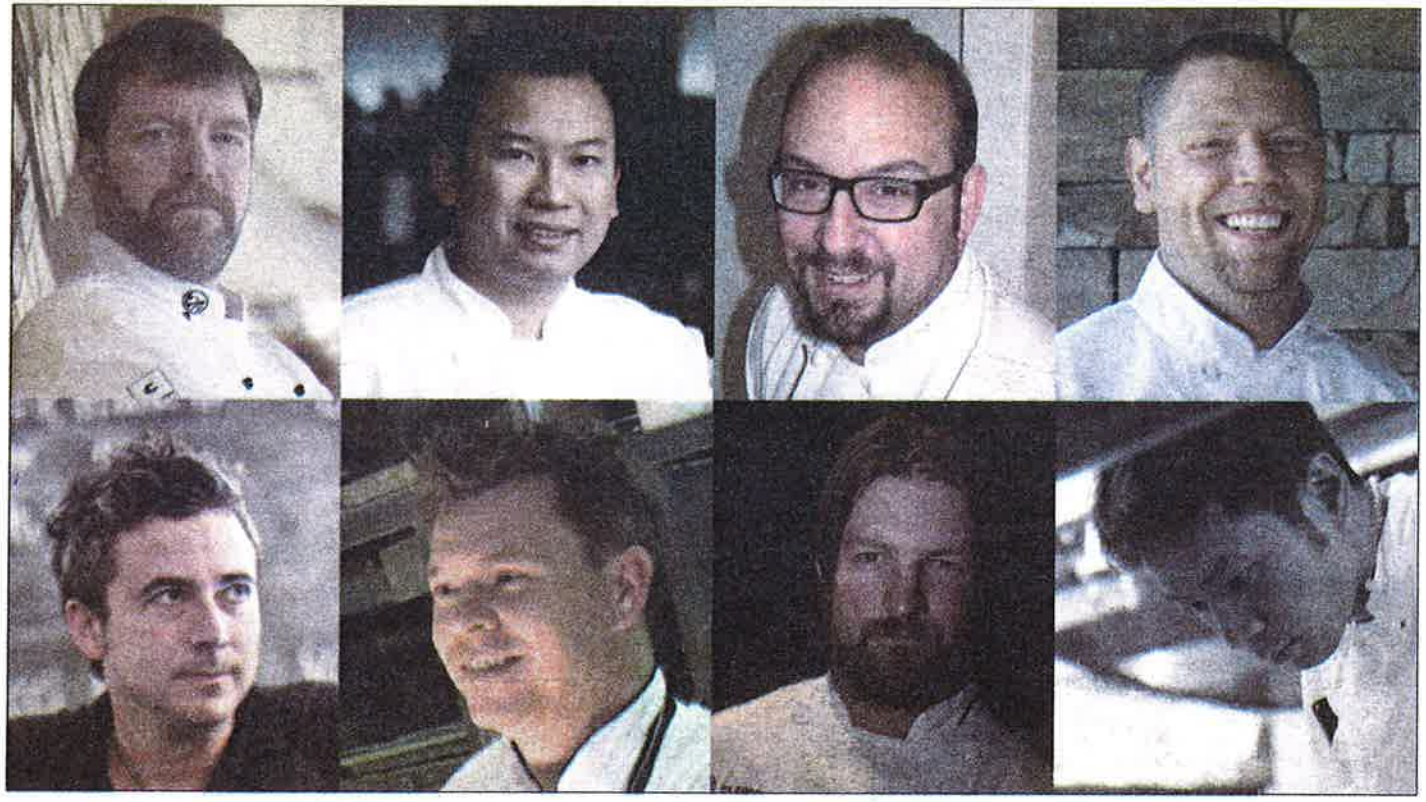

CONTRIBUTED

CANADA TOP CHEFS, (left to right top row) Robert Clark of Vancouver, Andrew Fung from Edmonton, Dan Walker of Saskatoon and Frank Dodd of Toronto, will compete alongside (bottom row left to right) Martin Juneau from Montreal, Michael Moffat of Ottawa, Jeremy Charles from St. John's and Duncan Ly of Calgary in the Gold Medal Plates' Canadian Culinary Championships this weekend.