

EPICUREAN FARE

Honoring Independence

It's a common misnomer that Cinco de Mayo is a national Mexican holiday equivalent to our 4th of July—it's actually more like an excuse to drink margaritas on a nice spring day. Mexican Independence Day is actually on September 16, and Los Sombreros restaurant is preparing to celebrate that auspicious day back in 1810. Azucena Tovar, owner of Los Sombreros, is offering a select, four-course *cena* of authentic Central American fare to her *patrones* September 16-21. The Menu de Independencia includes cream of cauliflower with bacon, four choices of appetizers including shrimp and papaya salad, entrees such as New York steak con mole negro de Oaxaca as well as pork, chicken and salmon dishes; we won't even describe the tempting desserts and special adult beverages. Find out for yourself. Los Sombreros is located in South Scottsdale at 2534 North Scottsdale Road. For reservations, call 480-994-1799 or go to lossombreros.com.

Safford Celebrates Salsa

Salsa will be the word uttered most in the City of Safford Town Square, when all the best salsas from the Southwest will be available to sample and judge at the second annual SalsaFest. Not only will there be a Salsa Challenge, the skies of downtown Safford will be decorated with hot air balloons on Friday evening as festivities begin for this weekend event and again on Saturday morning at sunrise. Salsa music and dancing, food demos and chili roasting, jalapeño- and salsa-eating contests, a kids area and more will keep everyone in the family fully entertained. A special Salsa Walk to benefit the Gila Valley Boys and Girls Club will also take place. The SalsaTrail, which is what inspired this event, includes the small Southern Arizona communities of Safford, Pima, Thatcher, Clifton, Solomon, Duncan, Willcox and York. Festivities will take place Friday-Saturday, September 26-27 from 5 to 9 p.m. on Friday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday. For more details, go to

salsatrail.com or call the Graham County Chamber of Commerce at 888-937-1841 or 928-428-2511.

Arizona Restaurant Week

It's about time that the country's fifth largest city had its own restaurant week, and 2008 is the year. From September 20-26, an estimated 100 restaurants will participate in Arizona Restaurant Week, putting some of the best chefs in town in the limelight. Dining favorites such as Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, Tarbell's, Bloom, Roaring Fork and Zinc Bistro will offer guests a three-course menu of signature dishes for \$29 per person, excluding beverages, tax and gratuity. Other great dining establishments that will join in for this special week include Sol y Sombra, NoRTH, Olive & Ivy and Flemings at DC Ranch. Arizona Restaurant Week is sponsored by several local organizations, including Phoenix and Scottsdale Convention and Visitors Bureaus, the Arizona Restaurant Association, *The Arizona Republic* and azcentral.com, Open Table and others. Visit arizonarestaurantweek.com for more information.

Win A Mercedes

On Saturday, October 4, Notre Dame Prep Gala is hosting the fourth annual A Taste of Excellence, hoping to entice more than 800 guests for this fundraiser with the raffle of a 2009 Mercedes-Benz sedan, cocktails and culinary attractions and dancing under the stars. Sally Cashman is the chair, and culinary chairs Brandon Maxwell and Michael DeMaria have gathered quite the impressive list of participating chefs from Tapino Kitchen and Wine Bar, The Herb Box, Jalapeño Inferno, Radio Milano, 3 Tomatoes and A Mozzarella and several others. The harvest theme of this year's event will be enhanced with the aroma of freshly roasted nuts, courtesy of Almond Brothers. Tickets can be purchased by calling Cathie Cuda at 480-483-2091. Notre Dame Prep is located at 9701 East Bell Road in North Scottsdale.

Volunteer At Frank And Lupe's

Make A Difference and the folks at Frank and Lupe's restaurant in downtown Scottsdale are coming together to present Food for Friends at Frank and Lupe's. Each month, the Mexican eatery will host special guests from local youth-serving organizations such as HomeBase Youth Services, young men and women who may enjoy, for the first time, fine dining. Wanting to bring a unique and positive experience to these young people who may be going through difficult times, Teddy Bernal, chef and owner of Frank and Lupe's, sees this as a simple way to give back to the community, as well as a way to say thanks to the many years of support his restaurant has received in the Valley. Volunteers are needed to help host these young guests each month. For more information, go to makeadifference.org or call 602-973-2212.

Chefs For The Arts

The third annual Dine Out with the Chefs: A Celebration of the Culinary Arts is taking place October 5 at the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, when anyone who loves food will have the opportunity to meet 17 outstanding chefs from the Valley's best restaurants and sample their wares. Participants include Eric Howson of Alto ristorante e bar from the Hyatt Regency Scottsdale, Carolyn Ellis of Arcadia Farms, Michael Rusconi of Lon's, Bernie Kantak of Mexican Standoff, Lee Hillson of T. Cook's, and many other wonderful culinary kings and queens. If you plan it out well, you can have a five-course dinner by the end of the evening. Pamela Swartz, author of *Dine Out Phoenix: Where to Eat From Chic to Unique* is behind this event, and she will be there to sign copies of the new second edition. Advance tickets are \$75, highly recommended and available at the Scottsdale Center box office, 480-994-ARTS (2787). Proceeds go to youth education and outreach programs.



Support Your Local Food Bank.

Orange Ribbon Hunger Pins have been created by **Designs By Lucinda** – a former homeless woman who started her own company to make cause-related pins that help nonprofits.

For \$14, half of the proceeds will go to the Association of Arizona Food Banks.

Please call 602-528-3434, ext. 18 to order.



Association of Arizona Food Banks

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