



## Preview: Four fabulous days of Vegas Uncork'd by Bon Appetit on the Strip



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Charlie Palmer, Andre Rochat and Hubert Keller at the 2012 Vegas Uncork'd by Bon Appetit Grand Tasting at Garden of the Gods at Caesars Palace on Friday, May 11, 2012.

By Robin Leach (contact)

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Never let it be said that Las Vegas isn't the world's capital of star chefs and super restaurant dining. It's proven this weekend yet again as Vegas Uncork'd by Bon Appetit gets under way with one of the largest gatherings of chefs, master sommeliers and food fans. More than 6,000 attendees are expected to attend the four days of eating and drinking.

The spectacular kicks off its seventh annual epicurean adventures Thursday afternoon with a ceremonial burst of prosecco sabered off outside Hakkasan Las Vegas in front of MGM Grand's gold lion. Michael Mina, honored Monday night with his induction [into the Who's Who of Food at the James Beard Awards](#) in New York, Guy Savoy and Francois Payard from Caesars Palace, Julian Serrano and Jean-Georges Vongerichten from Bellagio and Aria and Mary Sue Milliken from Mandalay Bay join Bon Appetit Editor Adam Rapoport and Cathy Tull of the Las Convention and Visitors Authority for the ceremony.

The Master Series dinners Thursday evening are a majestic masterpiece at Caesars: Award-winning Central chef Michel Richard promises a six-course affair; iconic Old Homestead offers timeless dishes for tasting; celebrity chefs Nobu Matsuhisa, Gordon Ramsay and Bobby Flay are on duty at their restaurants; and Guy Savoy, Francois Payard and the Pellegrino family at Rao's return. The after-party is at the newly opened Hakkasan, and I'll have my review of the dazzling Chinese restaurant in our Counter Intelligence column Wednesday.

Chef of the Century Joel Robuchon returns for his cooking-and-wine brunch at his MGM restaurant Friday, followed by chef Charlie Palmer's afternoon tea party at Aureole in Mandalay Bay. Nearby, Border Grill chefs Susan Feniger and Mary Sue Milliken host a tequila pairing and interactive cooking demo if the south-of-the-border drinks aren't too plentiful!

#### 2012 Vegas Uncork'd: Masters Series Dinners at Caesars Palace



#### 2012 Vegas Uncork'd: Grand Tasting at Caesars Palace



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Additionally, Michael Mina gives foodies a sneak peek of his PUB 1842 at MGM before its summer opening. The Light Group chef Brian Massie splurges with vodka and caviar at **Red Square** in Mandalay Bay. More than 2,500 guests are expected for the Grand Tasting poolside at Caesars' Garden of the Gods on Friday evening, with 50 award-winning chefs and more than 100 global wines.

On Saturday, "Top Chef" judge and contestant Hubert Keller, who flies in from Shanghai where he opened his first Asian Burger Bar last Sunday, joins with chef Laurent Pillard for a beer garden at Mandalay Bay. Nearby at Michael Mina's Strip Steak is a three-course Japanese wagyu tasting with handcrafted Japanese whiskey pairings, while Charlie Palmer's Aureole presents an Oyster Extravaganza. Francois Payard will reveal his pastry savvy secrets at his Caesars brasserie, and Michael Mina hosts a Block Party at Bellagio with chefs including Todd English, Akira Back, Julian Serrano and Jean-Georges Vongerichten.

Two aspiring culinary students from our Cordon Bleu Culinary Institute compete to win a \$20,000 scholarship in a Live Grill off presented by the Chase Sapphire Preferred travel rewards card. They'll be paired as sous chefs with Bellagio award winners Todd English (Olives ) and Akira Back (Yellowtail) for the ultimate live onstage barbecue challenge. The runner-up receives \$5,000.

"I am thrilled to participate in the grill challenge to help fund a local culinary student's schooling," said Todd. "Vegas Uncork'd is the perfect stage for a live challenge that supports the next generation of Las Vegas culinary talent." Andrew Knowlton, Bon Appetit restaurant and spirits editor, will serve as emcee and head judge, and a Chase Sapphire cardholder will judge the chefs' culinary creations and select the winners.

I planned on being a judge but will be reporting from backstage at The Rolling Stones concert at MGM Grand Garden Arena. Chase Sapphire cardholders attending also have a chance to win a private Sunday brunch with Julian Serrano. Celebrated chef Alain Ducasse tops it off with a midnight party at his Mix atop The Hotel at Mandalay Bay.

If you're full by the three days of feasting, fret not because the extravaganza continues Sunday: Gordon Ramsay Pub & Grill hosts a traditional English Sunday roast with all the fixings at his Caesars winner, and nearby Frank Pellegrino Jr. hosts his Italian brunch at world-famous Rao's.

Now it's time to drastically diet for 48 hours, lay off the calories and get ready to eat and drink your way around the world — all in a 3-mile section of the Strip. For a complete schedule, go to [VegasUncorked.com](http://VegasUncorked.com).