

GROCERY GOSSIP



RITA DeMONTIS

@ritademontis

rdemontis@postmedia.com

Watch what you eat – literally!

DEVOUR! The Food Film Fest: think of this film fest as TIFF on a platter! While Toronto is awash with stars and cinema magic, Wolfville, Nova Scotia is also gearing up for a special film festival taking place Oct. 22-27 — this one dedicated to all things food. Devour! is considered the world's largest culinary film festival and just recently, festival organizers announced the full film lineup for its 9th year at a Toronto-based event with the Italian Trade Commission — this year's programming and theme centres around "Celebrating Italian Food & Cinema."

The festival will be screening 80 plus new food-and-drink inspired films from 24 countries. "At its core, Devour! is first and foremost a film festival — but it's so much more than a night at the movies," says executive director Michael Howell. "For six days, Wolfville is transformed into a festival unlike any other, as



we pair an array of mouth-watering dishes with captivating films, experiential workshops and 100 plus events."

This year's opening gala film on October 23 marks the North American premiere of *From the Vine*, about a downtrodden man who finds new purpose in reviving his grandfather's old vineyard in his travels back to his rural Italian hometown. The film's multi-award-winning director Sean Cisterna and star Joe Pantoliano from the acclaimed television series *The Sopranos* will be in attend-

ance. Headlining the 2019 festival is award-winning chef, TV host, restaurateur and author Lidia Bastianich, who is curating a special presentation of *Big Night*, about immigrant brothers from Italy who open their dream restaurant in New Jersey (a film that was actually shot in Toronto.)

"This year's theme holds a special place in my heart. We're bringing Italy to Nova Scotia with a solid lineup of films from Italy to complement an array of talented chefs from around the world," says managing director Lia

Rinaldo. "We're delighted to be partnering with the Italian Trade Commission to bring amazing Italian products — like wines, cheese and prosciutto to Devour! this year."

And — I'll be there! As an official judge, (along with Peter L. Stein of Frameline and Justin Johnson of the British Film Institute), and to report on the whole event, not to mention indulge in some of the finest vino and prosciutto!

■ For additional details, or you want to attend, check out Devourfest.com, @devourfest, #devourtheworld; Novascotia.

com/events.

WAY TO GO, CHEF PAUL WAHLBERG: When TIFF comes to town, we look for the Wahlbergs. This year, it was Paul Wahlberg (the professional chef of the family) who was treated to the red carpet, when he was honoured by the Famous PEOPLE Players (Toronto's celebrity-themed black light puppet show performed by a special-needs cast) with their Daring to Dream award. Chef Paul was selected because of his entrepreneurship, generosity and passion for helping kids. The award came after a special lunch and black light show which included a tribute to the whole Wahlberg family with puppets of Mark, Don-



PAUL WAHLBERG

NEAL BURSTYN PHOTO

nie and Paul Wahlberg. It was all in support of FPP's educational programs for schools, to help students discover the entrepreneur inside them and to make their dreams come true by staying on the right path in life. The day before Wahlbergs invited some of the cast and crew of FPP (+ the puppets!) to have lunch with Paul Wahlberg at the Toronto restaurant. Kudos and congrats, Chef Paul!

■ Wahlburgers.ca. @WahlburgersCA.

GET YOUR GARLIC ON

TORONTO GARLIC FESTIVAL: The famous odiferous festival returns for its 9th year and this promises to be the stinkiest yet, with everything from garlic food to wine, desserts and even ice cream! Founded in 2011 by garlic grower Peter McClusky, this year you'll find over 50 varieties of delicious, crisp and hearty Ontario garlic, and some of the most amazing garlic-laced dishes made by local chefs. "Especially in these polarizing times, garlic and the Garlic Festival has

proven to be a surprisingly harmonious and unifying bright bulb for people from every cultural background," says McClusky.

Baking aficionados can learn to carve a garlic-shaped cake with dessert sculpture artist Megan Stasiewicz, art-lovers can sketch their own garlic bulb with Marilyn Bercovich and for cinephiles, there are screenings of the classic 1980 documentary film *Garlic Is as Good as Ten Mothers* directed by Les Blank and the 2018 documentary



Before the Plate by filmmaker Sagi Kahane-Rapport.

There's also the Strongest Garlic Breath contest and a fabulous variety of garlic-inspired dishes, including such desserts as special doughnut with roasted garlic vanilla sauce. Lots more, of course — BYOBreathmints optional!

■ Toronto Garlic Festival, Sunday Sept. 15, 2019, 9 a.m., to 5 p.m., at Artscape Wychwood Barns. Tickets are \$5 each (children under 12 get in free) and are available to purchase at the entrance or in advance online at Torontogarlicfestival.ca. @TorontoGarlic.



PLUMMER



TONI COLLETTE

TOM SANDLER PHOTOS

POPPIN' CHAMPAGNE

ANOTHER TOAST TO TIFF: The stars are out in full force, sharing their time and their influence. Just recently Christopher Plummer and Toni Collette were in town for the premiere of *Knives Out*, a black comedy whodunit film about a dysfunctional family get-together that goes south very quickly.

Both Plummer and

Collette signed a special Moët & Chandon 6L charity bottle at TheWrap's Toronto studio. The bottle will be auctioned by TIFF with proceeds benefiting its Share Her Journey initiative supporting women behind and in front of the camera. By the time the bottle is ready for auction, many other stars in town for TIFF will have signed it as well.

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