



# Litchfield Park Arts & Culinary Festival

BY: CHRIS WEAVER

NESTLED IN THE WEST VALLEY, approximately 15 miles west of Phoenix, Litchfield Park's ambiance of palm and orange tree lined streets is home to 4,500 residents and the annual Litchfield Park Fine Art and Culinary Festival. Over 200 nationally renowned Southwest artists display and sell original paintings, pottery, sculptures, blown glass, batik, fine jewelry and culinary specialties the first weekend of April every year in Litchfield Park, Arizona's downtown historic district. Artists, culinary demonstrations and specialty wines provide an exclusive venue in the heart of the celebrated Wigwam Resort community Saturday and Sunday, April 5th and 6th daily from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.

The 2008 event promises inspiring culinary dishes prepared by Valley of the Sun chefs. The Wine Garden offers venue-goers the opportunity to sample various domestic and international wines featuring Arizonan, Californian, Australian and Argentinian varieties. The historic Wigwam Golf Resort and Spa's community location provides an ideal backdrop for this outdoor festival.

### History and Inspiration

Litchfield Park's Assistant City Manager and Community Services Director, Sonny Gilbreth, states the original inspiration for the festival focused on producing an event to raise funds for the youth and adult sport and aquatic programs for the Litchfield Park Recreation Center. "The initial event involved a group of approximately 30 artists. Each year the event grew to include more artists and visitors. Karyn Horst, Litchfield Park Special Events Coordinator, and Candy Vermillion, Event Organizer, expanded the event and partnered with the Wigwam Golf Resort and Spa." The expansion offered visitors culinary cooking demonstrations and wine tasting opportunities.

Further, Gilbreth states the event has achieved the event's inspiration. "Last year the festival was recognized by Arizona Parks and Recreation as the 'best event in Arizona for communities with populations under 25,000' and the event continues to promote healthy lifestyles by raising funds for Litchfield Park Recreation Center programs."

Candy Vermillion, Event Organizer, estimates the 2007 event was attended by 30,000+ visitors. Vermillion reports the Litchfield Park "fine arts venue



is a success due to economics, location and the creation of a unique artisan village." With an event caliber comparable to Fountain Hills Great Fair, Tempe Festival of the Arts and

Carefree's Art and Wine Festival, Vermillion emphasizes the event craftsmen and artists are subjected to strict juried art show prerequisites to gain acceptance to participate in the festival.

Special Events Coordinator, Karyn Horst, promises visitors a unique and enjoyable festival experience. "Visitors can spend the weekend listening to the sounds and enjoying the sights of the Southwest while strolling through the fine art festival."

A typical day introduces visitors to an exclusive art venue that opens at 10 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday morning, closing at 5 p.m. daily. The family-friendly event offers free admission and free parking with live entertainment creating a connoisseur's marketplace with an array of original works including bronze sculptures, metal, clay, stone, pottery, photography, etchings, oil, watercolor and acrylic paintings. Enjoy one of the many vendor culinary delights or dine at one of Litchfield Park's local sidewalk cafes.

### Culinary Pavilion

The "demonstration cooking" format, conducted by the host chef, includes group instruction for participants emphasizing the essential ingredients and techniques needed to create fresh and exciting contemporary cuisine. The two-day schedule offers four one-hour afternoon demonstrations, two held each day, each featuring the preparation of a unique recipe. The \$10 per person participation fee includes a copy of the recipe, generous samplings and a glass of wine. Special Events Coordinator, Karyn Horst, explains "The Culinary Pavilion is designed for the novice or gourmet enthusiast and provides participants



with an opportunity to expand their culinary knowledge. Participants will learn proper technique, preparation and presentation."

### Wine Garden

If you enjoy wine, the festival's Wine Garden provides participants with the opportunity to sample wines in a controlled venue before purchasing. Purchase a ticket and select from a variety of domestic and international wines. Commemorative festival wine glasses, bottles and cases of wine are available to purchase and/or order. In celebration of the 10th anniversary, the Wine Garden is introducing a micro-brewed beer selection. Micro-brewed beers have unique taste, texture, color, and character. Beer lovers will enjoy the addition and the option to purchase a sample or glass of fresh, distinctive and quality micro-brewed beer.



### Entertainment

Continuous live entertainment includes performances by Arvel Bird and One Nation, the 2007 Native American Music Award's Artist of the Year. Arvel's lively Celtic fiddle tunes create a multi-cultural experience for all audiences. Bird incorporates Native flute, rattle, and chants into his eclectic musical experience ranging from classical, country, bluegrass, and jazz. Arvel has been featured at a variety of events including Gathering of Nations, Miss Indian World, Schemitzun, Red Earth, Midway Lake Music Festival (Canada), and Chasco Fiesta

Moond recording artists The Sahmas Brothers, Thano and Demetri, will also be performing at the 10th annual festival. Experience the captivating blend of instrumental sounds and rhythms with classical Spanish guitar that creates a unique Mediterranean contemporary jazz fusion. The duo has shared the stage with world renowned artists including Otmar Liebert, Mark Antoine, Jessie Cook, Bobby Caldwell, James