

09.23.2011  
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## **GALVESTON RESTAURANT GROUP TAKES HOME INAUGURAL "SILVER WHISK" AWARD**

This year's Epicurean Evening boasted record-breaking crowds, incredible food and the inaugural bestowing of the "Silver Whisk" award for best overall participation to the Galveston Restaurant Group and their Gumbo Bar concept.

All of the Galveston Restaurant Group properties and chefs received accolades during the evening. Mario's Seawall Italian Restaurant and Chef Richie DePlacencia took home the "Culinary Delight" award for their homemade Italian sausage and marinara sauce, Papa's Pizza received the "Tastiest Pizza Pie" award for their assorted gourmet pizza slices, Sky Bar Steak & Sushi and Chef Joaquin Villareal received the "Flavorful Nosh" award for assorted sushi pieces, and Saltwater Grill and Chef Zenaido Castorena touted the "Piece de Resistance" award for a lamb chop served with three cheese polenta and blackberry port reduction sauce.

The highlight of the evening, however, was presenting the "Silver Whisk" award to Galveston Restaurant Group owners Johnny Smecca, Joey Smecca and Danny Hart for their newest concept, Gumbo Bar. The restaurateurs introduced Gumbo Bar to the dining scene in 2008, after Hurricane Ike left a void in the Postoffice Street Arts & Entertainment District. The concept has since steadily gained popularity for its casual Creole-style menu and live, steam kettle cooking.

"The Silver Whisk really is the 'piece de resistance' of the Epicurean Evening," commented Event Co-Chair Jan Inlow. "It's our newest, most prestigious award recognizing the efforts made by an organization as a whole; Galveston Restaurant Group has worked very hard throughout the years, sharing their successes with the community in so many ways." In addition to her co-chairing commitments, Inlow also works as GRG's Director of Downtown Operations.

Galveston Restaurant Group has supported the local community for almost 40 years, providing meals and fundraising support for schools, non-profits and community groups island-wide. They have been recognized numerous times for outstanding service to organizations such as the Ronald McDonald House of Galveston, Rotary Club, the Grand 1894 Opera House, the Salvation Army and many others.

"We are honored not only to accept the Silver Whisk award, but also to demonstrate the exciting, marketable restaurant concepts that can be produced in Galveston" remarked owner Danny Hart. "Gumbo Bar is our first franchise and its arms are reaching far beyond the Island. It's a success not only for Galveston Restaurant Group, but for the post-hurricane strength and historical uniqueness Galveston offers as well. That's what the Silver Whisk represents."

Galveston Restaurant Group is a multifaceted restaurant company comprised of Johnny Smecca, Joey Smecca and Danny Hart. Galveston Restaurant Group owns and operates Mario's Seawall Italian Restaurant, Gumbo Bar, Saltwater Grill, Sky Bar Steak & Sushi, Papa's Pizza and Little Daddy's Gumbo Bar. Visit them online at [www.GalvestonRestaurantGroup.com](http://www.GalvestonRestaurantGroup.com).