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HANMI APPLAUDS CHEF COMPETITORS

SAIPAN, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS – The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands (HANMI) applauds local chefs who competed in the HANMI/NMTech Chamorro Bistek Cookoff on Saturday (June 24) at the 24th Annual Taste of The Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden at Garapan Fishing Base.

Chefs faced off in a one-hour to prepare the best bistek, a local favorite traditionally characterized by tender beef and tantalizing gravy. Chefs also had to incorporate two mystery items unveiled as the competition began, kangkong and biscuits.

The contest was also sponsored by Triple J SuperFresh and Truckload Store J, distributor of Certified Angus Beef®. Current and former student chefs of the NMTech Culinary program joined the competition, with Damian Palacios winning 1st place and \$750 cash from HANMI.

Triple J GM and HANMI Board Member Jay Santos was one of the judges at the event.

“Congratulations to all the participants as this was a difficult competition to judge because all of the dishes were so good,” said Santos. “After several years hiatus, it’s appropriate for HANMI to come back with another chef competition to support and encourage the talented members of our vital F&B workforce in the tourism industry. It was great to partner with Northern Marianas Technical Institute and the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) on this event.”

Other judges were popular “mukbang” mega-eater and YouTuber Fume of Korea and HANMI Legal Counsel Marcia Schultz.

Rounding out the winners were Jonathan Borja winning \$500.00 for 2nd place, and Christian Manzanares winning \$250.00 for 3rd place.

The Taste of The Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden is an annual signature event of the MVA. The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands was established in 1985 as a professional forum for the hospitality industry of The Marianas. HANMI also makes regular charitable donations to support non-profit organizations and tourism-related government projects.



Jonathan Borja, 2nd place winner in the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands/NM Tech Chamorro Bistek Cookoff on June 24, 2023, in Saipan puts the finishing touches on his dish, served with risotto. The cookoff was held as part of the 24th Annual Taste of The Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden.



1st place winner Damian Palacios, 2nd right, and other competitors and judges of the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands/NMTech Chamorro Bistek Cookoff on June 24, 2023, take a commemorative photo. The cookoff was held as part of the 24th Annual Taste of The Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden.



Damian Palacios, 1st place winner in the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands/NMTEch Chamorro Bistek Cookoff on June 24, 2023, in Saipan displays a photo of his late grandmother and a lucky Irish rock from her that he carried in his pocket on his way to winning his first chefs competition. The cookoff was held as part of the 24th Annual Taste of The Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden.

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