

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 1, 2011

### Media Contact:

Su Byron ▪ [subyron@verizon.net](mailto:subyron@verizon.net)

- *For media ticket inquiries, please email Su Byron at [subyron@verizon.net](mailto:subyron@verizon.net)*
- *To speak with Kate Atkin, executive director of the Sarasota-Manatee Originals, call 941-955-3663*
- *To speak with Michael Klauber, chair of The Grand Tasting, call 941-366-000, Ext. 236*

# The Fifth Annual Forks & Corks Food & Wine Festival

## Tickets for The Grand Tasting and Forks & Corks University on Sale November 14!

*Presented by The Sarasota-Manatee Originals, this four-day culinary celebration brings together celebrated regional chefs, world-renowned vintners and brewmasters, and industry insiders*

(Sarasota, Florida) Tickets go on sale November 14, 2011, for the much anticipated fifth annual Forks & Corks Food & Wine Festival. Presented by The Sarasota-Manatee Originals (SMO), the four-day culinary festival features the anchor event, **The Grand Tasting** (January 29), in the courtyard of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art; **Forks & Corks University** seminars (January 28) in Michael's Wine Cellar; and various **winemaker events** at area restaurants (January 27, 28). **Tickets for the Grand**

**Tasting and Forks & Corks University can only be purchased online. Grand Tasting tickets are \$75 for general admission; \$125 for VIP admission.** Tickets include free admission to the museum's art galleries on the day of the event. **Forks & Corks University tickets are \$110 for the full-day session; \$60 for the half-day session.** A four-course gourmet lunch prepared by top Originals member restaurants is included with Forks & Corks University ticket price. ***For information and tickets, visit [www.freshoriginals.com/forksandcorks](http://www.freshoriginals.com/forksandcorks).***

"We're recommending people buy their tickets early because we sold out weeks prior to the events last year," says Kate Atkin, executive director of SMO. "Due to the fact that we're now regarded as the area's premiere food and wine festival, we predict tickets to sell at even a faster rate than last year. So, buy your tickets as soon as you can. They make great holiday gifts!"

The Grand Tasting features signature dishes from the area's top chefs, along with a vast array of wines and beers presented by guest vintners and breweries. "We have over 60 international winemakers participating this year," says Michael Klauber, chair of the event. "We're thrilled to have wine celebrities joining us from all over the world." Klauber says that this year's winemakers hail from Bordeaux, Italy, South America, South Africa, New Zealand, California, Oregon and Washington. "The most exciting news is that guests will be able to buy their favorite wines at the event after sampling them for the first time this year," he adds.

This year's Grand Tasting charitable partner is The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, and will feature a silent auction of fine wines to benefit the American Red Cross. "Raising money for the American Red Cross is a vital element of this

event,” says Atkin. “We’ve raised more than \$110,000 in the past four years for our charitable partners and hope to continue to raise much needed money for the worthy organizations.”

*Tickets for Forks & Corks winemaker events will go on sale at the individual participating restaurants. For a complete listing, visit the website. Forks & Corks sponsors include Sarasota Magazine and Gateway Bank. For more information about the fifth annual Forks & Corks Food & Wine Festival, visit [www.freshoriginals.com/forksandcorks](http://www.freshoriginals.com/forksandcorks) or call 941-955-3663.*

### **About The Sarasota-Manatee Originals**

The Sarasota-Manatee Originals is a not-for-profit organization, founded in 2003, of more than 50 locally-owned, independent restaurants in Sarasota and Manatee counties. Member restaurateurs are dedicated to preserving the culinary heritage of the Suncoast.

**Photos courtesy of The Sarasota-Manatee Originals**