



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chef Mario Amaral Honored by Menifee City Council for Winning Coveted Pinnacle Award

Local restaurant Savage Chef Bar and Grill now has two Pinnacle Award-Winning Chefs, Mario Amaral and Dylan Soro, further elevating Menifee's emerging culinary scene.

MENIFEE, CA – Surrounded by family and friends, Chef Mario Amaral was honored last night by Menifee City Council for winning the Pinnacle Award at the 15th annual SoCal Chef Open. Amaral is the third chef from Menifee to receive the prestigious award.

The SoCal Chef Open was hosted on August 15 at Peltzer Winery in SoCal Wine Country at the Oak Grove Center. This year's competition was comprised of twelve of the greatest culinary artists in Southern California. The chefs showcased their culinary expertise in order to win the Pinnacle Award and People's Choice Award. The Pinnacle Award is voted on through a blind tasting by culinary experts, one of them being Menifee's own Chef Rosie O'Connor of Provecho Grill, a past Pinnacle and People's Choice Award Winner. Event patrons determine the People's Choice winner for the evening.

Chef Mario Amaral, who competed for his first time this year, represented Savage Chef Bar and Grill in Menifee. He won over the judges and received the top prize for his delectable Sweet Corn Panna Cotta made of sweet corn, savory tomato espuma, royal sturgeon caviar, olive oil dusting, and micro greens, all sourced from local farms and businesses. In 2021, Chef Dylan Soro of Savage Chef Bar and Grill took home the Pinnacle and People's Choice Award, the 2nd time in the event's 14-year history a Chef has received both awards, who happen to both be from Menifee.

"I am thrilled to have joined my colleague Chef Soro as a Pinnacle Award winner along with a variety of amazing chefs from the region," said Chef Amaral "It is an honor to bring home this prestigious award again on behalf of Savage Chef Bar and Grill and showcase Menifee's vibrant culinary scene, and my unique style on how to make food exciting to the palate."

Menifee's award-winning chefs have been instrumental in shaping the city's growing and diversifying food scene. Each chef blends their prestigious training, diverse flavors, and unique family recipes into a culinary experience for residents and visitors.

"Having award-winning chefs like Chef Amaral and others here in our city has certainly set the table for Menifee's culinary future," said Mayor Bill Zimmerman. "We are seeing more and more dynamic and high-end restaurants opening or looking to locate here in Menifee."

To experience the award-winning flavors, perfectly paired dishes, and craft cocktails at Savage Chef Bar and Grill, visit their location at 30145 Antelope Rd., Suite 106, or visit www.savagechef.com.

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ABOUT CHEF MARIO AMARAL: *Chef Amaral grew up in Southern California before joining the U.S. Coast Guard in 2001. Mario was always fascinated by food and cooking. Upon departure from the military in 2005, he moved to Las Vegas, Nevada to attend Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts. From culinary school Mario opened Red Rock Resort and worked at Olives inside the AAA Five Diamond Bellagio hotel. While at Olives, Mario caught the attention of Chef Todd English and was asked to assist in opening multiple restaurants in Las Vegas, Nevada and across the country. Mario then went on to open the cake boss star Buddy Valastro's restaurant Buddy V's inside the venetian hotel, and work for Wolfgang Puck at his flagship restaurant Spago inside the Caesars Palace hotel. Mario got recruited by the Tuscan brands group in Salem, New Hampshire to open a brand-new restaurant in the Seaport district of Boston, Massachusetts and oversee operations at the group's flagship. From there Mario went on to oversee operations at Todd English p.u.b in Birmingham, al followed by assisting with operations at Chef English's restaurants in west Palm Beach, Florida and Boston, as well as assisting Chef English with multiple events including Superbowl live and new restaurant openings in Las Vegas. He is very excited to be back in Southern California to share his experience and passion for cuisine on this new adventure. Chef Amaral has been featured on "The Talk", "Access Hollywood", the "Home Shopping Network" and has been a past award winner of the Round 1 Iron Chef Bellagio, BOH Brawl, and Las Vegas famous "DICED" competition.*

ABOUT MENIFEE: *Situated in the heart of southern Riverside County along Interstate 215, Menifee is a vibrant, new city of more than 100,000 residents who enjoy a pleasant year-round climate, abundant recreational offerings, reasonably priced housing, and convenient proximity to some of Southern California's premier attractions and employment centers. Within its 50 square miles, Menifee's business, retail, and entertainment outlets are starting to shape the community's character and this growing economic base is also contributing favorably to the city's strong financial position. Menifee's growing family-oriented population values the city's ongoing commitment to public safety, community events, and smart growth for the future. All of these elements are working together to support the city's strategic vision to make Menifee one of the state's most promising new cities.*