

# The New York Times

## A Backstage Pass to a High-End Food Festival



WHILE affluent connoisseurs sample the offerings this week at the annual Food & Wine Classic in Aspen, Colo., the public will get a look behind the scenes.

The insider's look at the renowned chefs and their doings is not the production of an upscale brand. It is sponsored by Hellmann's mayonnaise, which is beginning its "Real Tastes Better" marketing campaign in tandem with the gathering of top chefs.

Nearly two dozen videos from the food festival, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary, will be shown online, in part underscoring Hellmann's pledge to switch to cage-free eggs by 2020. (Hellmann's, a Unilever brand, is made from oil, eggs and vinegar.)

"It's not just the real ingredients," said Brian Orlando, senior marketing director for Hellmann's in the United States, "it's bringing the real side of an exclusive event to the growing number of food lovers."

Food & Wine magazine every year turns Aspen into a landscape of tastings and cooking demonstrations, seminars, nonstop parties and elbow-brushing with celebrity chefs like Jacques Pépin and Mario Batali. Tents will hold 300 food sellers, winemakers, craft brewers and spirits distillers for samplings from Friday through Sunday.

All 5,000 tickets to the festival were sold out early this year, which has not happened since the economic downturn took hold in 2008. Participants pay \$1,185 a ticket, in addition to travel and hotel expenses.

Hellmann's will be in the mix with Tim Love, a Texas chef who also appeared in the brand's campaign last year. Mr. Love will be cooking at the festival, and hosting and interviewing fellow chefs as they prepare food and later unwind. To attract viewers, Hellmann's plans "teaser" videos, Internet banner ads and radio commercials.

Hellmann's, known as Best Foods in the Western states, is also starting an online "Real Tastes Better" sweepstakes on Thursday with weekly prizes including tickets to the Food & Wine Classic next year. The contest will be on hellmanns.com until Aug. 20.

The Aspen partnership, with Food & Wine magazine, which is owned by American Express Publishing, is helping reshape Hellmann's century-old brand. Last year, Hellmann's, long a staple American sandwich spread, focused on using the condiment in quickly assembled recipes like Parmesan-crusted chicken.

Hellmann's is addressing consumers' increasing interest in quality ingredients and about where food comes from, whether they are dining out or cooking at home. For example, menu descriptions like "fresh," "made from scratch" and "real" were overwhelmingly favored by those surveyed in the "2012 Dining Out Report: A Look Ahead," released in March by Mintel, a research firm in Chicago.

Hellmann's chose the festival to link its ingredients to "a place where real food reigns," Mr. Orlando said.

"We want to show that great food is accessible," he added. Mr. Love, he said, will show viewers simple shortcuts that professional chefs use, and cook several new dishes using Hellmann's.

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## A Backstage Pass to a High-End Food Festival (Continued)

“There is an amazing amount of food talent, and content, which we will be able to capture and bring to people who normally can’t access it,” Mr. Orlando said.

Mr. Love, with a video crew, will ask fellow chefs how they define “real food” and how they pick their ingredients. He will also discuss their best food memories and their kitchen staples. The crew will follow Mr. Love through a day of his preparations and cooking, including for a charity fund-raising lunch of classic Hellmann’s dishes.

There will also be videos, most of which will run about two minutes, of ingredient preparation and kitchen setup, and of events like the red-carpet welcome reception and the late-night dessert party attended by the chefs and sponsored by companies like Lexus, Godiva and Whole Foods.

“This is the first time that people will see so much that goes on behind the scenes,” said Christina Grdovic, vice president and publisher of the Food & Wine brand. “The videos will show all the work that goes on behind the scenes, down to the rolling racks of prepared ingredients.”

In addition to posting real-time video content, Hellmann’s personnel will also post live updates to Twitter and Facebook and images to Instagram during the festival. Viewers will be able to send Twitter messages and ask Facebook questions and leave comments for their favorite chefs attending the events that will appear at [hellmanns.com](http://hellmanns.com) and [Facebook.com/Hellmanns](http://Facebook.com/Hellmanns).

Ogilvy Entertainment, a division of Ogilvy & Mather, a unit of the WPP Group, also has created a television spot depicting the loving assembly of a bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich — with Hellmann’s, of course. The 30-second “Awakenings” commercial will be shown on networks and cable stations as well as their Web and mobile outlets.

The Hellmann’s campaign includes radio spots, recorded by Mr. Love, for 22 media markets. On-air promotions and disc jockey testimonials will promote the sweepstakes.

Hellmann’s did not specify its spending for the campaign, but last year the brand raised its advertising outlay to \$39.7 million from \$34.6 million in 2010.

“We want to take good food, and show people they can make it the best food,” Mr. Orlando said.

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