

SEPTEMBER 21 & 22, 2013



NASHVILLE, TN

TALENT TICKETS SCHEDULE ABOUT BLOG FAQ SPONSORS

FOOD FESTIVAL 101 WITH CHRISTINA GRDOVIC

Jul 19, 2013

★ SHARE

We could try to tell you how Music City Eats is putting a **fresh spin** on the food festival experience, but we thought it would be more fun to **bring in an expert** – a trained professional in the art of gastronomic revelry. Check out what *FOOD & WINE* magazine publisher Christina Grdovic is most excited about with our inaugural festival, plus jot down a few of her **pro tips** as you prep for the weekend!

Specialty food and wine events take advantage of exciting destinations across the country. Beaver Creek had snow sports, Aspen had mountain fun, South Beach had the obvious, but what about Nashville? What sets Music City Eats apart from other food festivals you've attended with FOOD & WINE?

At the *FOOD & WINE* Classic in Aspen we decided a few years ago that we really needed music to be an integral part of the experience. Last year we had an Elvis Costello concert and this year we had the wildly popular 80s cover band, the Spazmatics. Nashville literally is Music City, so to be involved in a *FOOD & WINE* Festival that is **hosted by the Kings of Leon** in the country's music capital is really exciting and definitely sets it apart from all the others.

On that note, why do you think these unique food-focused experiences have become so popular?

At *F&W* alone, we are introducing more people to great food not only through the magazine, but through our [website](#), mobile, [Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Tumblr](#). With more and more cooking shows, cooking competitions and more celebrity chefs on the scene, there are **more people that want to have culinary experiences firsthand**. They want to **taste the food and learn how to cook it**, or **just be entertained by the chefs** – and they want to do it all over the country, for all kinds of food from fried chicken to foie gras.

You've mentioned that the hardest part of any food festival is that you can't be in two places at once – any suggestions for first-timers on how to tackle their festival weekend agenda?

File under hypocritical advice – **plan ahead but don't be afraid to be spontaneous**. You need to plan ahead because you need to know what's going on and who is going to be there, but you also need to be **willing to change course for adventures and new discoveries**.

Having been with FOOD & WINE now for more than 15 years, you've likely amassed several tips and tricks from seasoned culinary professionals along the way. What's been your favorite lesson you've learned at a festival from a chef demo or tasting?

I can't remember who it was, but I learned to **peel ginger with a spoon**. And while I don't actually have many opportunities to peel ginger, it's a **good party trick**.

Perhaps more of a well-kept secret in the past, Nashville is now emerging as a major player on the culinary innovation scene. How do you think this new energy will feed into the festival?

We have **never seen more excitement around a new festival**. People immediately get that Nashville is hot, and they want to be part of it. We named **Erik Anderson** and **Josh Habiger** at Catbird Seat as *F&W* Best New Chefs in 2012 and we know people who want to go to Nashville just to check out their restaurant. (That was actually Emilie and **Tim Love**).

You work with industry leaders on a daily basis, but who are you most excited to learn from at Music City Eats?

Nathan Followill.

Apart from the educational aspect, we all know that food festivals are really just one big party – plain and simple. With so many likeminded lifestyle enthusiasts together at once, there are bound to be some fun and unexpected moments. Any favorite memories you can tell us about?

What happens at the *FOOD & WINE* festivals, stays at the *F&W* festivals.



JULY 19, 2013