



## **20th Annual Maui Onion Festival Drew Onion Fans to Whalers Village Fine Shops & Restaurants in Kā'anapali**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Kā'anapali, Maui – Celebrated Chef David Paul Johnson of the much anticipated, new west Maui restaurant called David Paul's Island Grill took top honors in the Maui Onion Recipe Contest at the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Maui Onion Festival with a Pan Seared Island Snapper served with reduced Maui Onion Jus, Soft Polenta and Pickled Maui Onions. Patrick Callarec of Chez Paul in Olowalu came in a close second with Russell Siu of 3660 on the Rise in Honolulu in third place, Colin Nishida from Side Street Inn in Honolulu in fourth place and Sean Christensen of O'o Farm in fifth place.

"All of the chefs did an amazing job," said Lisa Donlon, marketing manager for Whalers Village Fine Shops & Restaurants. "They continue to present the Maui Kula Onion in creative ways. In fact, in several dishes this year the chefs used two to three techniques to showcase the onion on one plate. The judges were impressed."

Judged by Rick Browne, host and executive producer of the PBS series "Barbecue America," Chris Speere, coordinator with Maui Culinary Academy, Carla Tracy, dining editor at Maui News and Shannon Wianecki, dining editor at Maui No Ka Oi magazine, the chef participants enjoyed a friendly competition amongst an enthusiastic crowd.

The winner of this year's Maui Onion Eating Contest Keiki Division was Miksa Karcheski, a 10 year old from Haiku, Maui. Karcheski said, "I'm happy and excited that I won. I didn't think I was going to win because the girl next to me. She was a lot bigger than me." Karcheski won a \$100 gift card for Whalers Village Fine Shops & Restaurants and received the traditional Maui Kula Onion lei.

In the adult division, Soichiro Kato of Tokyo, Japan took the top prize. Pre-and-post contest Kato said "Maui No Ka Oi, Maui No Ka Oi". The 48-year-old winner is a seven time repeat visitor to Kā'anapali, Maui. He and his wife have been visiting Maui since 2000. They couldn't make it in 2008. The Kato's own two timeshare units: one is at The Maui Marriott Ocean Club Villas and the other is at The Westin Maui Kā'anapali Ocean Resort Villas. Kato also won \$100 gift card from Whalers Village and the Maui Kula Onion lei.

The schedule of activities at Center Stage started at 10 am with opening remarks by emcees and on-air newscasters Guy Hagi and Ramsay Wharton of KGMB TV. The crowds gathered early for the chef demonstration, raw Maui Onion Eating Contests, Polynesian Hula Show, Maui Onion Recipe Contest and Tahitian Dance Show.

At the beach lawn stage, the schedule started at 10 am with a Tahitian show followed by TV Celebrity Chef Cutty Cutler showing kids how to make fresh Hawaiian Smoothies, Maui Onion Growers Association representatives talked story about the history and cultivation of the famous Maui Kula Onion and there were lively performances by The Air Force Band of the Pacific, Beniot Jazz Works, Polynesian Hula Show and Island Sounds by Ray Gooliak.

Throughout the day, Maui farmers and chefs offered food, refreshments, produce and products for sale. The list included:

- Chez Paul's – Maui Kula Onion goat cheese tart with oven roasted lamb and arugula salad
- Maui Marriott Ocean Club – Maui Kula Onion chowder
- Sansei Seafood Restaurant & Sushi Bar – 'ono plate lunches
- Grown on Maui Farmers Market – variety of fresh produce
- Maui Onion Growers Association – crispy, fried Maui Onion Rings and boxed Maui Kula Onions
- Ali'i Kula Lavender – wonderful lavender products
- Maui Jelly Factory – jellies, jams, syrups and more
- Kona Brewing Company Beer Garden at Leilani's Kapalua Room
- Whalers Village – event t-shirts and other logo items (proceeds from the sale of all Maui Onion logo items benefit Habitat for Humanity)

"The Maui Onion Pairing Dinner, sponsored by Hula Grill, was one of the week's highlights," said Lisa Donlon. The dinner offered great Maui Onion- inspired dishes and each course was paired with local beers from Maui Brewing Company."

**Sponsors:** An event like the Maui Onion Festival has many sponsors to make it happen and this year, they include Bargreen, Island Air, Kona Brewing Company, Hawai'i magazine, Honolulu magazine, Maui Marriott Ocean Club Villas and Kā'anapali Beach Resort Association.

**About Whalers Village:** Recognized as Maui's premier oceanfront shopping destination, Whalers Village Fine Shops & Restaurants is part of the master-planned, award-winning Kā'anapali Beach Resort and hugs the famed three-mile long strip of Kā'anapali Beach. Set on 8.5 tropical acres, diverse, carefree, and sophisticated at once, the three-level open-air village comprises 111,222 square feet of retail space with a vibrant variety of shops and restaurants. Open daily from 9:30 a.m. until 10 p.m., Maui's premier beachfront shopping center also features a whale museum, a center stage for cultural entertainment, and celebrated Maui Onion Festival. It's the place to shop, dine, and play. Whalers Village offers three hours of free parking with validation.

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