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## **Local Santa Maria Chef to be Named "Wine Classic Culinary Honoree" At Central Coast Wine Classic**

**Santa Maria, CA- Chef Rick Manson**, the much-loved owner of the eponymous *Chef Rick's Ultimately Fine Food* in restaurant in Santa Maria, is being feted by the wine and culinary world on July 14, 2007, for his achievements as nationally recognized, yet locally based, gifted chef. Manson will be following in the footsteps of past honorees, **Gary Danko** (chef/owner of Gary Danko, San Francisco), **Jacques Pepin** (French-born American chef and popular author and television host) and **Madeleine Kamman** (Award-winning author, chef and television personality). "The guy is a prince," says **Archie McLaren**, the **Central Coast Wine Classic Chairman**, who founded the CCWC in 1985. The "Wine Classic Culinary Honoree" award is granted to chefs who have shown excellence, dedication and innovation in their field.

**Jim Clendenen**, of **Au Bon Climat Winery** in Santa Maria, says of Manson "Some people are born into the hospitality industry. Chef Rick's demeanor, his receptiveness and his smile define that. He is an excellent Chef the consummate host and he always delivers a lagniappe, (Cajun for something extra special) which transforms your experience with him into something memorable." **Nicholas Miller**, family owner of **Bien Nacido Vineyards** and the **Central Coast Wine Services**, adds, " Chef Rick has not only been supportive of the local wine industry, but each one of his patrons. Every time you go in there Chef Rick makes you feel like you're his most important customer. I think his food speaks for itself as he catered my weddings rehearsal dinner." **James Ontiveros**, ninth generation Santa Maria farmer and grower and owner of his own wine brand, **Native 9**, adds, "Not only has Chef Rick's been "the culinary experience" of Santa Maria Valley for years, he has also been one of the biggest constant supporters of the wine industry, as well as the community at large. We are so fortunate to have a leader like Rick in our community, I'm truly proud to call him a friend."

Manson, as this year's honoree, will have the rare distinction of hosting celebrity chefs and culinary personalities **Narsai David** (Culinary advisor and radio personality) and **Cat Cora** (Food Network, America's first female Iron Chef), at an exclusive cooking demonstration and luncheon at Dolphin Bay Hotel in Shell Beach. Additionally, he will be preparing the Auction Luncheon, which over the years has become one of the most coveted and esteemed auction luncheons in all of Central and Southern California. This year's Auction Luncheon will be held at picturesque Tolosa Winery.

"What an honor! It is so exciting to be respected by my colleagues, both locally and nationally and to be in the company of Gary Danko, Michel **Richard** and Jacques Pepin, chefs I truly respect. It's totally and ultimately fine! This award means the world to me because I'm receiving it in my own back yard." Manson

first began earning critical acclaim at the King and Prince Hotel on historic St. Simons Island, off the coast of Georgia. For 10 years, Manson was considered one of the finest executive chefs of southern cuisine in all of the south. He has more recently gained national acclaim for his brilliant creations at his restaurant in Santa Maria, which has garnered him consistent "Best Restaurant in Santa Maria" accolades since opening.

The "Wine Classic Culinary Honoree" Award is one of several highlights that unfold during the Central Coast Wine Classic weekend. Since its inception in 1985, the CCWC has granted over 700,000 dollars in monetary donations to the Central Coast community, with grants given to organizations in the arts, health care, music and education.

To learn more about the Central Coast Wine Classic, please visit [www.centralcoastwineclassic.org](http://www.centralcoastwineclassic.org)

To learn more about Chef Rick Manson and his restaurant in Santa Maria, please visit [www.chefricks.com](http://www.chefricks.com)

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