

# Rocky Mountain News.com

## Parker: Chefs fulfill foodies' fondest wish



**Penny Parker**

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ASPEN - No matter how many times you watch chefs compete on shows like *Iron Chef America*, *Hell's Kitchen* and *Top Chef*, nothing compares to having one of the competition's winners prepare a meal for you.

So it was with **Ilan Hall**, winner of Bravo's second *Top Chef* contest.

Hall collaborated with Montagna executive chef **Ryan Hardy** to create a tastebud tantalizing three-course lunch at The Tavern (formerly Ajax Tavern) for foodies who ponied up \$125 per person to support Grow For Good, *Food & Wine* magazine's push to raise \$1 million to promote farm-to-table practices. Plans call for opening a Denver Grow For Good office as one of 25 resources across the country for chefs, restaurant owners and farmers.

This 25th anniversary of the Food & Wine Magazine Classic in Aspen, one of the nation's fiercest foodie fests, is dedicated to raising dough for the program that's dedicated to supporting local farms and sustainable agriculture.

The lunch included Hardy's starter of finocchiona salume with farm radishes, arugula, olives and homemade goat cheese, Hall's entree of olive oil poached Colorado pheasant breast (I can't even describe how good it was) and Hardy's buttermilk panna cotta with strawberry rhubarb preserves.

Hall, who's spent most of his time traveling since being crowned *Top Chef*, said his goal is to open a 20-seat restaurant in New York City. "I'm not cooking right now as much as I'd like to because my schedule is too busy," he said.

**MAG'S MEMORIES:** Janet O'Grady, editor of *Aspen Magazine*, has been to 20 out of 25 Food & Wine Magazine Classics.

Twenty years ago, Janet and her husband bought the fledgling publication. Since then, Janet (her husband has since passed away) has grown the eight-times-a-year Aspen mag into a slick publication with 100,000 circulation.

"When we came here and bought the magazine, people said you're crazy," Janet said during *Aspen Magazine's* pretty people pre-Classic party at the Little Nell Wednesday night.

"But we've always positioned ourselves as a locally based national magazine. Eighty-five percent of our subscribers live in New York, Atlanta, Chicago and Miami."

Janet says the Food & Wine Classic put Aspen on the culinary map.

"The food and wine scene here is unrivaled," she said. "We have these amazing chefs and restaurateurs."

**SIGNS OF SNARKINESS:** Are Aspenites different from Front Rangers? You be the judge.

The yellow triangle sign at the entrance to Glamour Gulch used to read: "Icy conditions may exist." But someone's handiwork changed it to "Pricey conditions may exist."

Eavesdropping on a man and a woman at the *Aspen Magazine* party: "She's had a lot of plastic surgery."

"You mean her boobs arrive 10 minutes before she does?"

And, this from a woman at the St. Regis Hotel: "There are actually black people in Aspen - four that I know of."

*Penny Parker's column appears Tuesday through Saturday. Listen to her on the Caplis and Silverman radio show between 4 and 5 p.m. Fridays on KHOW-AM (630). Call her at 303-954-5224 or e-mail [parkerp@RockyMountainNews.com](mailto:parkerp@RockyMountainNews.com)*