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Beverly Hills Pie Bake a'la Beverly Hills & Piesta Winners Announced

Traveling 675 Miles was Worth it for First Place Winner



Pictured are Pie Bake & Piesta winners and judges: Standing L to R: Annie Miler (judge), Owner of Clementine Café & Bakery; Ginger Gath of Beverly Hills – 2nd Place Winner; Stella Kalish of Los Angeles – 3rd Place Winner; Emma Nica (judge), last year's First Place Winner; Bouquet Veprin of Los Angeles – Most Pieutiful Winner; Melani Shaum of Beverly Hills – 1st Place Winner; Vice-Mayor Nancy Krasne (judge); Sandra Spagnoli, Chief of Police (judge); Frances Bilak, Chairperson for Recreation and Parks Commission (judge).

Beverly Hills, Calif. - Last Sunday's Pie Bake a'la Beverly Hills & Piesta **First Place** winner and Beverly Hills resident Melani Shaum went to great lengths to buy sour cherries for her award-winning "Lagier Ranch Sour Cherry Pie." The annual Pie Bake & Piesta is held every June at the Beverly Hills Farmers' Market and attracts pie-bakers from all over to participate in the contest. This year, sixteen contestants entered the competition for First, Second and Third Place, and a special category for most Pie-utiful! Melani Shaum, a resident of Beverly Hills for nearly 20 years, placed First in the contest and had her husband drive 675 round-trip miles to buy sour cherries from Lagier Ranch in Escalon, California. "I had to work, so my wonderful husband took a road-trip to the farm and brought the cherries to our kitchen so I could make this special pie," said Shaum.

Sour cherries are special to Melani! Growing up in Ohio, she and her family drove to Michigan all the time to pick sour cherries. When she moved to California she found a farm in Leona Valley that cultivated sour cherries and she carried on the cherry-picking tradition with her children. Eventually, the farmer of Leona Valley retired and Melani could not find another farm in Southern California that cultivated sour cherries until just a few years ago when she discovered Lagier Ranch.

Melani first entered the contest ten years ago and has won several awards. She finds the Beverly Hills Farmers' Market an outstanding market that provides her with a great opportunity to obtain high quality fruits and vegetables without leaving town or having to drive hundreds of miles as she did for her cherries.

Second Place Pie Bake & Piesta winner went to Ginger Garth, also from Beverly Hills, for her Summer Apple Pie. This was Ginger's first pie contest entry.

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Third Place went to Stella Kalish, one of the youngest pie-bake contestants yet to enter the annual competition since its inception 20 years ago. Stella baked a pie every week for five weeks to prepare for the competition. Stella's grandmother cultivated Stella's love of baking and they re-create family recipes all the time when they bake together. Stella's mom Dara says, "Stella is invigorated and inspired by the kids cooking competitions she watches on the Cooking Channel. She bakes twice a week and has attended baking camps and classes. She has made from scratch, French macaroons, cakes, cookies and pies, sometimes following the recipe, and at times creating her own."

The **Most Pieutiful** award was captured by Bouquet Veprin for her French Apple Tart. The apples were meticulously placed, one by one, to create a beautiful flower. "I was never a pie baker, but I bought a cookbook and saw the French Apple Tart recipe and made it." says Bouquet.

Participants entries were made from locally grown Californian fruit and critiqued by judges Vice-Mayor Nancy Krasne; Recreation and Parks Commission Chair Frances Bilak; Annie Miler, owner of Clementine's Bakery and Café; Sandra Spagnoli, Beverly Hills Chief of Police and Emma Nica, last year's first place pie bake winner. Entries were graded on appearance, creativity, crust, consistency and flavor. Gift certificates, made possible by supporting sponsor Clementine Cafe, were presented to First, Second and Third Place, as well as for the "Most Pieutiful".

The Pie Bake a'la Beverly Hills & Piesta is held annually in June at Beverly Hills Farmers' Market. For more information about the Farmers' Market and featured events and activities, visit www.beverlyhills.org/FarmersMarket.

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