

HANGOVER OBSERVATIONS

NEW YORK CITY

Donatella Arpaia Is Surprise Winner at Meatball Madness

Friday, October 8, 2010, by Amanda



The Meatball Shop's Daniel Holzman and Michael Chernow

Everyone knows with these **New York Wine & Food Festival** events, you either come to play or don't bother coming at all. To win the people's choice award at events like Burger Bash (think Katie Lee, Josh Capon, Spike Mendelsohn) or last night's 2nd Annual Meatball Madness, you better work that crowd, ask for votes—in this case **wooden Eater chips!**—and sure, yes, have a solid product.

Thus, last night **Donatella Arpaia**, in her red chef's coat and tight short dress beat out strong contenders from Locanda Verde, The Meatball Shop, Motorino, Pulino's, Peasant, and more with a mini version of the meatball sandwiches she serves in a cart outside her Midtown restaurant **Mia Dona** and a clincher, a coconut cupcake. She posed for pictures with her fans, handed out every single plate, straight up asked for votes, and of course, had a spread of her products, which included her cookbooks, some fliers for her new restaurant Donatella, and (!) a *Donatella* magazine! Click through above for photos of the event and pictures of the win and below for some hangover observations.

- 1) Andrew Carmellini, the defending champion of Meatball Madness, brought back his famous lamb meatball sliders and added [some fake tattoo action](#).
- 2) Lavo, in true Lavo nightclub fashion, tried to woo the crowd with a beautiful hot young thing in a minidress. We had to wait about five minutes to take her picture while an old man kept asking her to promise that she would call him. Utterly creepastic.
- 3) Food Network peeps in attendance: Giada De Laurentiis, Next Food Network Star Aarti Sequeira, and Anne Burrell in a super bright and psychedelic dress. Also: [Andrew Zimmern](#).
- 4) **The Meatball Shop guys**, true to form, were barking like circus carnies about trying their balls, the spiciness of their balls, how you can't judge a man by the size of his balls, and other similar pleasantries. They were also one of the solid crowd favorites.
- 5) Best non-traditional ball: Ciano's **Shea Gallante's** wonderfully rich and funky veal meatball with a dark gravy and parmesan polenta. Followed by Peasants tasty but mushy veal ball with bone marrow.
- 6) A comment from **Josh Ozersky** for the Hangover Observations: "There is absolutely no way that anyone here can try every single meatball. Therefore no one should be allowed to vote!" Pure outrage! But no one said this was a perfect system.
- 7) The most blatant (and successful) vote-grubbing: Towards the end, Donatella walked away from her station with her ballot box and her mother in tow just before voting closed at 8:30 and asked everyone if they still had their chips left.
- 8) The biggest crowds of the night were assembled around host **Giada De Laurentiis'** station – three people deep the entire night, camera flashes, smiles and handshakes all around. She even had security detail quietly surveying the scene.