

FIELD REPORTS

Live From The Aspen Food & Wine Classic 2013

Celeb chefs and rising stars, at altitude

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From left: Chefs getting their 5k on, Eric Ripert toasting life, Rick Bayless and Susan Feniger. [+ ENLARGE](#)

The **Food and Wine Classic in Aspen** is like summer camp for celebrity chefs, media, Burgundy collectors, Aston Martin enthusiasts and food fans who converge on the sleepy Colorado town for all sorts of fun. Here are some of highlights, both food and breakfast sandwich related.

Best of the tents

The 12 Best New Chefs being honored over the weekend served dishes in two hour blocks at the grand tasting tent, offering up their signature dishes and high-fives to the crowd. I sampled many of the dishes, but three really stuck out. Mission Chinese chef Danny Bowien did a wonderfully sweet Hokkaido scallop (raw) with pesto. This was served as a bite, atop a square of Danish rye bread from Tartine in San Francisco. Chris Shepherd from Underbelly in Houston served his Korean-style goat with ddukbokki, fiery and balanced. Andy Ticer and Michael Hudman, of Andrew Michael Italian Kitchen in Memphis, deconstructed the classic chicken and biscuits into broth form. Wow.

Mini Jimmy's

Located in a former utility closet at the legendary in the front of legendary Aspen restaurant Jimmy's we found what is likely the world's smallest secret bar (it holds two people). We got our name on the list, waited 20 minutes, and were led into the dimly light room. And, hey, there's Jim Meehan pouring drinks.

José Andrés epic Wines From Spain party

Every year you can count on José Andrés to throw a ridiculously over-the-top party in a \$20 million house up on a hill overlooking many \$10 million dollars houses. He co-hosted the barbecue with the Spanish Trade Commission, who are responsible for promoting the great wines (and pork products) the country is famous for. The spread did not disappoint: Grilled Iberico ribs and little sandwiches stuffed with chorizo. A committed Andrés charge grilled massive Gulf Coast shrimp gambas style with lots of garlic and paprika. Batali, Boulud and Colicchio were busy watching the NBA playoffs. I, personally, fell into my glass of Albarino. So crisp and great for summer. Whoops. Spotted: Andrew Zimmern, Marcus Samuelsson, The Meatball Shop guys, Jenn Louis, Chris Shepherd.

Erik Anderson of Catbird Seat made a breakfast sandwich

It sort of went like this: Jimmy Dean breakfast sausage, runny egg, American cheese, Tapatio hot sauce, Heinz ketchup placed between two toasted and very well buttered Bays English muffins. I can confirm that this needs to go public SOON.

Afternoon cocktails at the Jerome

One of the side events at the Classic are the American Express sponsored trade talks — which includes discussions about social media, marketing and other words of wisdom to stay relevant. But what I most liked was the cocktail hour, specifically the drinks being poured by the team at 213 Spirited Ventures (of The Varnish, Seven Grand and many others). The cocktails included a perfectly balanced French 75, a Sazerac play and plenty of bourbon.

Ricardo Zarate made us believe that Peru is the next big thing

Zarate is the chef-owner of Mo-chica, Picca and Paiche in Los Angeles and a great ambassador for Peruvian cuisine in America. During a happy hour, we tried his play on steak tartare and drank pisco sours and pretty much want this guy to open a restaurant in New York City yesterday. At the tasting tents he served carapulcra (sundried potato stew, crispy pork belly, chimichurri) and blue shrimp ceviche (kaiso seaweed, aji amarillo leche de tigre).

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