

UCI CLIMATE GRANT • ONCOLOGY CENTER AT CITY OF HOPE • BENNY & MARY'S RESTAURANT

**IRVINE**

# WEEKLY

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**ROCK GODS UNITE IN THE DESERT**

# RAW POWER

BY BRETT CALLWOOD



OCTOBER 13, 2023 NO. 10

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# UC IRVINE RECIPIENT OF \$1 MILLION GRANT FOR 'RADICAL' CLIMATE HUB

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

UC Irvine has become one of 10 UC campuses to be awarded a \$1 million grant from the University of California Office of Research and Innovation for the university's efforts to address climate-focused research and innovation.

In addition to UCI's extensive climate research, the Irvine-based campus was also recognized for spearheading a new climate initiative called RADiCal – the Resilience and Adaptation Development in California – a climate innovation hub that will seek to apply climate-focused research to find solutions for real world dilemmas.

RADiCal will incorporate a three-pronged approach to innovating climate research that include multi-industry collaborative workshops designed to exchange knowledge on climate action and share market intelligence.

The second RADiCal approach will facilitate funding for climate solutions projects by utilizing the UCI Beall Applied Innovation's Proof of Product grant program, which has funded more than \$4 million in research projects since 2015.

RADiCal's third approach will focus on business incubation by way of the Orange County Climate Action Business Incubator. The incubator is a partnership between RevHub, Sustain SoCal, Impact Hub and UCI Beall Applied Innovation, with a primary focus on business, "with an emphasis in climate action and health equity."

Pramod Khargonekar, Vice Chancellor for Research and RADiCal principal investigator, expressed optimism and eagerness to involve experts from all facets of academia into a new era of climate research at UC Irvine.

"UCI researchers from a variety of disciplines in physical sciences, engineering,

biological sciences, public health, social sciences, humanities, arts, law, and business have been leaders in climate and environmental research for more than half a century," Khargonekar said. "The time has come to greatly accelerate our efforts at converting the research and knowledge of our experts into practical solutions that are urgently needed to help address climate resilience and adaptation problems in California."

The generous grant is part of the state's \$15 million first phase funding associated with the \$100 million University of California Climate Action Innovation and Entrepreneurship Awards.

Speaking on the impact RADiCal will bring to the region, Errol Arkilic, UCI's Chief Innovation Officer, said he is anticipating a vast, long lasting impact that will help generate new research and real world applications for climate research.

"A climate action translation hub to accelerate the commercialization of research ideas rapidly and effectively is needed to leverage our region's vast capacity and capability toward products and services which will help California and the world effectively address our most pressing climate-related issues, which is what the RADiCal initiative will accomplish," Arkilic said.

In addition to UC Irvine's latest \$1 million grant for its effort to address climate focused research, three UC Irvine professors were awarded more than \$8 million in climate action grants in August.

"I am very pleased that UCI faculty will be leading three exciting projects under the California Climate Action seed and matching grants program," Khargonekar said, "These collaborative projects hold great potential to help California communities respond to, adapt to and minimize the negative impacts of climate change."

# \$100 MILLION GIFT BRINGS SPECIALIZED ONCOLOGY TO CITY OF HOPE

CITY OF HOPE WILL PIONEER THE FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND NATIONAL INTEGRATIVE ONCOLOGY PROGRAM WHICH WILL MERGE ASPECTS OF EASTERN HEALING AND WESTERN MEDICINE.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

On Tuesday, Sept. 12, City of Hope announced a \$100 million gift from philanthropist couple Andrew and Peggy Cherng, co-founders and co-CEOs of Panda Express, which will be dedicated to the creation of Cherng Family Center for Integrative Oncology at City of Hope.

Set to be developed at campuses in Irvine and Los Angeles, City of Hope's national integrative oncology program will become the first-of-its-kind, as it incorporates Chinese medicine and other methods used in Eastern healing.

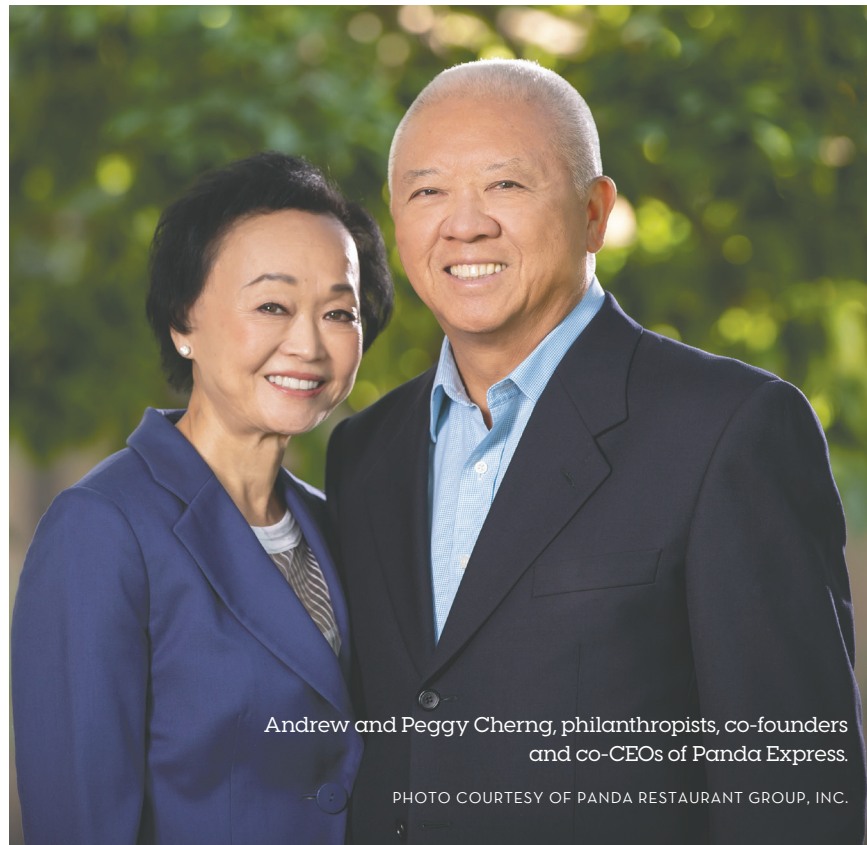
In terms of methodology, studies provided by the Journal of Clinical Oncology have found that acupuncture, hypnosis, general massage, meditation and yoga practice have provided evidence for pain management in certain types of cancer treatments.

Robert Stone, CEO of City of Hope and the Helen and Morgan Chu Chief Executive Officer Distinguished Chair, expressed gratitude and honor for the Cherng's generous donation.

"We are grateful for this gift, which will allow us to lead the way in integrative oncology and continue to pioneer compassionate medical innovation as we have done at City of Hope for more than 100 years," Stone said.

He added that innovative holistic care is just as important as medical treatments.

"Innovative and holistic care is part of our culture and mission; we are committed to supporting and treating the whole patient – not just the cancer. I am honored that our cancer expertise, world-class research environment, national patient population, robust clinical trials program and compassionate ethos have prepared City of Hope



Andrew and Peggy Cherng, philanthropists, co-founders and co-CEOs of Panda Express.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PANDA RESTAURANT GROUP, INC.

to lead this work."

Peggy Cherng, who obtained a Ph.D. in electrical engineering prior to founding the Panda Restaurant Group, said it was her goal to unite East and West through her businesses, and is inspired to do the same with this philanthropic donation.

"Panda Restaurant Group began 50 years ago with a vision to bring the best of Eastern and Western flavors and cultures together through food. In the same spirit, we hope the Cherng Family Center of

National Medical Center, said this nuanced Oncology program will not only meet the needs of patients, but will also accelerate cancer research, and spearhead the development of new treatments that could be used on a global scale.

"The Cherng Family Center for Integrative Oncology will be the epicenter of translational research, new drug development and holistic care that meets a pressing need for patients and enhances our connection to the diverse communities we serve," Kim said. "City of Hope is creating a new standard of care through a scientifically rigorous process. Our vision is to create an international destination for integrative oncology that transforms the way people with cancer receive care."

For now, City of Hope will begin its nuanced vision of Integrative Oncology Program in Southern California, with plans to expand nationwide. The program will be led by Richard T. Lee, M.D., who currently serves as the Cherng Family Director's Chair for the Center for Integrative Oncology at City of Hope.

Kristin Bertell, chief philanthropy officer at City of Hope, said the Cherng family's gift is reflective of the years of volunteerism at the foundation of City of Hope.

"This visionary gift from the Cherng family is a profound testament to their generosity and continued desire to give back to the community," Bertell said.

"Donors and volunteers have powered City of Hope's lifesaving work for more than a century, and their commitment will have a significant and lasting impact on the future of cancer care. We are so grateful to the Panda Charitable Family Foundation for its leadership in helping us create the most holistic approach to cancer care, anywhere."

Integrative Oncology becomes a model of bringing the best of Eastern and Western medicine together to unlock holistic healing for our communities," Cherng said. "At Panda, one of our core values is giving and we are grateful to help establish, through this gift from the Panda Charitable Family Foundation, pioneering integrated cancer care to not only save lives, but improve the quality of life for cancer patients."

Looking ahead, Edward S. Kim, M.D., M.B.A., vice physician-in-chief, City of Hope

# MUSIC

## RAW POWER

### ROCK GODS UNITE IN THE DESERT AT POWER TRIP FESTIVAL

BY BRETT CALLWOOD



JAMES HODGES PHOTOGRAPHY

Back in 2016, the Desert Trip Festival at the Empire Polo Club in Indio, the site of the annual Coachella Festival, brought together six of the greatest artists in the history of rock 'n' roll. The Stones, Bob Dylan, Paul McCartney, Roger Waters, Neil Young and The Who all played over three days, two bands performing headline-length sets each evening. Some playfully referred to it as "Oldchella," but the magnitude of the event couldn't be questioned.

This weekend, the same format will be applied to six of the biggest names in hard rock and heavy metal. Power

Trip will feature Guns N' Roses and Iron Maiden on Friday, AC/DC and Judas Priest on Saturday, and Metallica and Tool on Sunday. That is simply immense.

The bill originally included Ozzy Osbourne, incidentally. When the Black Sabbath man and solo metal legend had to pull out for health reasons, Priest (who, like Ozzy, happen to be from Birmingham, England) was happy to jump in.

"Whether Ozzy had anything to do whatsoever with us taking over, I don't know," says Priest's Ian Hill. "But within a very short period of time from him announcing he couldn't do it, to us getting

the phone call, we jumped at it. It's a mega bill. Six very well-established, high standing bands all together on the same festival – it was something that you want to get involved in. It didn't take us very long to say yes, really."

Hill, a very sweet guy to have a Zoom conversation with, is intrigued about the whole "two bands a night" thing.

"It's a strange concept, isn't it?," he says. "We're used to European festivals – multiple bands on every day on multiple stages from the beer tent all the way up to the main stage. It might go on for two or three days like that – we're used to that. Ever since 1970 when I went to the

Isle of Wight. So yeah, six bands over three days, everybody gets to see the headliner. You couldn't get six bands of this stature all on the same bill on the same day. There wouldn't be the time, or the room for the egos probably. Who would wrap the show up? So yeah, it'll be interesting. It's the first thing like this that we've ever done. We've been out with bands like Kiss and AC/DC before, years ago. So we've been on the two-big-act bill, sort of thing. But with the festival theme, I don't know. We'll have to wait and see."

Tool man Adam Jones is similarly psyched.

"It's really cool, it's an honor just to be asked with all of these heavy-hitters involved," Jones says.

Priest will be playing before AC/DC and Hill says the two bands go way back.

"I will watch them for a bit," he says. "We haven't seen them for a long while. I've seen them on stage – like I say, we toured with them back in 1980 and we had an absolute blast with them. They're all great lads. We'd finish the gig and then go out with them afterwards. Travel on the bus with them occasionally. So we got to know them quite well. But that was the last I saw of them for a long, long time. I've seen them live on a couple of occasions. But I just didn't want to go barging backstage. It can be a zoo at the best of times. I'm not gonna add to that. It'll be great to catch up with them again. I'm looking forward to it."

Meanwhile, Tool will perform before thrash giants Metallica, fresh from their triumphant shows in L.A. at the SoFi Stadium.

"We'll definitely be seeing them," says Jones. "I might bring my son. I think playing on the bill, just Metallica and us, it's absolutely going to inspire us. We're excited to be at our best and to microwave the crowd."

That's the fascinating, and thrilling, thing about this format – it makes sense that the two bands performing on the same night will push each other, inspire each other to give their best.

"I would say yes generally," says Hill. "But we're two bands that are quite wide apart musically, and image wise. We were probably very similar at one point.



Tool

TRAVIS SHINN

But yeah, it's always nice to at least hold your own with bands of a similar stature. Or the headliners in this case. So yeah, I suppose you do get an extra kick out of it and try a bit harder."

Hill says that while a new album is almost ready to drop (the follow up to 2018's *Firepower*), there won't be any new songs performed at this festival.

"No, it'll be the celebration of what we've been doing for the past 50 years," he says. "There will be a couple off *Firepower* on there, and a mixture of the stuff from the past albums. There should be something for everyone there, that has been following us over the years. You can't keep all the people happy all the time, but you can keep most of them happy with a bit of luck."

Due to the fact that they were added to the bill late, Judas Priest's stage setup will be much the same as the one they used on their recent 50th anniversary tour.

"It's pretty much the same stage set that we've just come off tour with," Hill says. "We're not even tooled up for the new tour yet. There's a lot of time to go to get that in and put it together, and manufac-

ture it. So we'll go with what we've got, and it'll be most of what we had on the 50th anniversary tour. One or two things might not be there – we didn't have a great deal of time to get everything together. It's been a matter of maybe a month, that's all, since we knew."

Jones says that there might be a few surprises in the Tool setlist.

"We dusted off some tunes that we haven't played in a long time," he says. "Songs that we think will be appropriate for the setting."

Back to that new album, and Hill says that he believes it's better than *Firepower*, although he admits that he would say that.

"It's funny because you sort of feel uncomfortable touring without a new record," he says. "It's just one of those things. We did it recently with the 50th anniversary thing that we did right after *Firepower*, and it just seemed strange that we weren't promoting anything, apart from celebrating 50 years and coming out the other side in one piece. At least for the most part anyway."

Jones says that Tool has been working on new material but they're a long way from a follow-up to 2019's epic *Fear Inoculum*.

"We're always working on new material, but nothing is currently in a finished state," he says.

Tool will go directly from *Power Trip* into a North American tour. Judas Priest, meanwhile, will be taking a well-earned break.

"We did the 50th anniversary thing and the *Firepower* thing right before that, so we've been touring solidly for the best part of four years," says Hill. "So we decided to take this year off, recharge batteries (they need recharging more often than not these days), but then when this cropped up, we couldn't turn it down. Something of this stature, you couldn't say no. So we decided to do it. So yeah, general family stuff. Spending time with the kids and the dog and the wife and what have you. Maybe a holiday or two, a weekend or two away, and the usual family stuff."

Even metal heroes need a holiday.

*Power Trip* took place Oct. 6 to Oct. 8, at Empire Polo Club, Indio. Visit [powertrip.live](http://powertrip.live) for more info.



Tool

TRAVIS SHINN

# ENTERTAINMENT

## THE EXORCIST: BELIEVER POSSESSED BY DOLLAR SIGNS

ANOTHER WEAK INSTALLMENT OF THE CLASSIC SERIES.

BY ASHER LUBERTO

**A**fter four dreary sequels, it's about time someone put an end to the *Exorcist* franchise. The series kicked off with a delightful nightmare that turned heads around the country, but then came a string of misfires that weren't so much scary as terrifyingly silly, which seems to be a common theme amongst horror classics. You thought *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* was spooky? Here comes four more installments that are far less effective. Director David Gordon Green tries to hide this franchise's sequel/reboot skeletons in the closet with *The Exorcist: Believer*, but he ends up adding one more corpse to a mountainous pile.

The film is a textbook example of how studios continue to churn out worthless reboots, taking game changers and stretching them into legacy sequels that bare none of the qualities that made the first entry a success. It doesn't matter if the camera doesn't glide, if the mood doesn't chill or the art-house sensibilities are gone, as long as audiences are willing to pay for something with the logo on it, which leads us to more crummy films like this one.

There aren't many similarities between *Believer* and *The Exorcist*. They both have possessed girls and that's about it. The rest of this shameless cash grab from Blumhouse is chock full of the studio's nasty visuals and excessively operatic shocks. Despite a restrained opening--in which Green introduces his protagonists--*Believer* quickly shifts into a jolt factory centered around grief.

Victor (Leslie Odom Jr.) lives with his



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES

daughter Angela (Lidya Jewett) on the outskirts of town, where they try to get over the loss of her beloved mother. On a foggy afternoon, Angela and her friend Katherine (Olivia O' Neill) decide to wander into the forest for a little escape, but return two days later with no memory of their adventure. Uh oh! Looks like it's time to call a priest.

Just like the heroine in 1973, the girls slowly start to experience body changes that are supposed to resemble puberty but are far worse than any menstrual cycle. Their bodies begin to wither, their skin turns pale and their eyes morph into golden orbs, which causes certain adults to assume possession while others doubt such paranormal possibilities. In

low-lit rooms, they argue over whether this a natural occurrence or something different, with Victor on one side and a handful of characters (including Ellen Burstyn's returning mother) on the other.

The script is most frequently about faith, hope or a lack of both, which of course culls inspiration from William Friedkin's form and style directly reflecting these themes in the original. In a symbolic shot, a priest arrives at a manor cloaked in mist, illuminated by a street lamp's heavenly aura and swallowed by the night's ethereal dusk--an allegorical exploration of the story's interplay of light and dark.

Sadly, Green doesn't have the ability to pull off these moments, which makes his motifs seem surface level as opposed to

metaphorical. He continues to explore ideas of religion and spirituality, but seems far more interested in setting up the next death, rather than fleshing out any moral quandaries. He did the same thing with his *Halloween* movies, putting an emphasis on jump scares over atmosphere and substance.

*Believer's* recycled feel suggests that maybe it's time to leave our horror staples alone, for good. There's no point in bringing these classics back from the dead when they are already startlingly alive, available to watch in streaming and still make us feel the way they did when they came out-- even with remakes like this threatening to haunt their legacies.

# BENNY AND MARY'S TO BE NEWEST 'RESIDENCE' AT IRVINE TOWERS THIS OCTOBER

O.C.'S HUSBAND AND WIFE RESTAURATEUR DUO CYNTHIA VIGIL AND CHAD REINHARDT WILL DEBUT THE WHIMSICAL BENNY AND MARY'S – THEIR SEVENTH CULINARY ENDEAVOR. WITH ELEVATED CLASSICS AND AN ECLECTIC ATMOSPHERE, THE NEW IRVINE HAUNT IS SAID TO BE ONE-OF-A-KIND.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

The Irvine Towers will soon be home to Benny & Mary's – a new whimsical restaurant concept created by Orange County-based husband and wife restaurateur duo Cynthia Vigil and Chad Reinhardt.

With a grand opening set for October, Benny and Mary's will debut an elevated lunch, dinner and weekend brunch menu curated by Chef Matthew Resler.

Resler's identity as a chef can be found in the fictional namesake behind Benny and Mary's concept. After more than 14 years of experience in the U.S. Marine Corps and law enforcement, a life changing event inspired Resler to pursue his culinary dream. Since then, Resler has earned tenure as an Executive Chef and culinary consultant for multiple establishments around the nation, including Pomme Frite in Palm Springs.

For lunch at Benny and Mary's, guests will find bright dishes that feature locally sourced ingredients. A perfect example of Resler's culinary repertoire can be seen in the chopped Kale Salad with green and purple kale, red onion, yellow bell pepper, heirloom tomatoes, English

cucumber, avocado, crispy quinoa and an agave mustard vinaigrette. Another lunch favorite is the Korean Short Rib Tacos with bulgogi-braised short rib, house-made kimchi, gochujang aioli and fried garlic.

Much like Resler's carefully curated menu, the concept behind Benny and Mary's is simple yet vibrant, explains Vigil. Together, Vigil and Reinhardt have now established more than a half dozen frequented O.C. haunts, including Toast Kitchen and Bar and Mimosas Brunch and Dinner.

As for the theme, Vigil explained that Benny and Mary's plays on the fictitious characterization of two eclectic homeowners in which guests are invited to immerse themselves within their residence.

Vigil promises a sophisticated and whimsical experience.

"Orange County diners will soon have the opportunity to break bread with Benny and Mary, two very eccentric individuals whose space is quite eclectic, yet surprisingly comfortable," Vigil explained. "We are confident that this wholly unique space with a fabulous atmosphere will captivate with its

vibrant energy and whimsical sophistication."

For dinner, Resler continues the theme of international vibrancy, bringing guests the flavors of Thai-style cuisine, with Thai Mussel Pot with Prince Edward Island mussels, garlic, shallots and leeks tossed in a coconut-lemon-grass broth with micro wasabi, served with toasted baguettes.

However, Benny and Mary's dinner menu caters to elevated takes on traditional fare including Resler's Muffaletta with capicola, mortadella, salami, pistachio pesto, artichoke tapenade, wild arugula and roasted garlic aioli on focaccia.

Guests will also salivate over the Drunken Goat Burger with an 8-ounce all-beef patty, wine-infused onions, roasted garlic aioli, wild arugula and tomato jam on a brioche bun.

Other entrees include Bucatini Pasta with house-made fennel sausage, whipped ricotta and pistachio pesto; and Short Rib Osso Buco with 12-hour braised short rib, seasonal vegetables and



PHOTO COURTESY OF BENNY AND MARY'S

amaretto-butternut squash puree with a port demi-glace.

And on weekends, Benny and Mary's brunch.

Benny and Mary's will feature a Saturday and Sunday brunch with dishes like a pork belly "Eggs Benny" that features poached eggs and pork belly, topped with wild arugula and pink peppercorn hollandaise on English muffins.

As for other brunch bites, Resler also highly recommends the Butter-Poached Lobster Deviled Eggs, the Confit Duck Hash, the Wine-Poached Pear Labneh with Fruit & Granola, and the Chipotle Cheddar Biscuits with Chorizo Gravy.

While Benny and Mary may be fictional characterizations, Resler's attention to detail in the kitchen is anything but fictional.

Orange County residents may want to bring a welcoming gift.

*Benny and Mary's is located in Irvine Towers at 18420 Von Karman Avenue.*

# FOOD

## MEXICAN STREET CORN BRUSCHETTA IS A BREADWINNER FOR POSTINO

IRVINE'S POSTINO WINE CAFE IS EXCITED TO CROWN ITS NEWEST "CHAMPION" BRUSCHETTA AFTER A SUMMER LONG BRACKET-STYLE BRUSCHETTA COMPETITION.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER



PHOTO COURTESY OF POSTINO

**W**ord on the street is that there's a bruschetta in town following Postino Wine Cafe's inaugural Battle of the Bruschetta this summer. Mexican Street Corn bruschetta, created by Chef Aguilar from Postino's Cinco Ranch location in Katy, Texas, was the clear frontrunner of the three-round, bracket-style competition.

The challenge gave guests a chance

to indulge in some new tasty bruschetta combinations and a chance to vote on a "champion" bruschetta that would ultimately become a permanent menu item.

Launched in June, Postino's bracket-style competition placed eight experimental bruschetta combinations, which were created by Postino chefs around the nation, in a head-to-head style battle. New bruschetta combinations

were introduced every two weeks, with the combinations receiving the most votes from guests moving onto the next round.

Speaking about the success of Postino's first-ever Battle of the Bruschetta, Jonah Winn, General Manager at Postino, said that participation was strong in Irvine, with many guests eager to find out the results each week.

"What made it even more exciting was the team's involvement; they were genuinely invested in the competition, checking the votes to see which bruschetta was leading. Both guests and team members were eagerly anticipating the results, and it created a sense of camaraderie as everyone rooted for their favorite bruschetta contender. It was a unique and enjoyable experience for all involved.

Ironically enough, the champion Mexican Street Corn bruschetta, which is made with Postino's housemade elote, pequin pepper, feta cheese and fresh cilantro, was introduced in the June debut match against the Italian-themed Italiano – also known as the Italian Stallion.

The Italiano was made with finocchiona salami, smoked ham, white cheddar, aioli, chopped romaine, caramelized onion and guindilla peppers.

Winn added that the hype around the Mexican Street Corn bruschetta was noticeable from the start.

"When Mexican Street Corn was first served on the bracket, the guest reception was incredibly positive right from the beginning. It was evident that it would be a leading contender because guests responded enthusiastically," Winn said. "We could tell it was special when guests started returning and actively inquiring about its return or the next contender it would face. The buzz and excitement around it was quite apparent."

In the second of four battles, the Mediterranean made with Romesco, fresh cucumber, kalamata olives, shallot,

chopped tomatoes, feta and a champagne vinaigrette, faced off against the Devilest Egg, which was made with deviled egg dip, dill pickle, crispy bacon, Yukon gold potato chips and chives.

The Mediterranean pulled ahead of the Devilest Egg, but was eventually defeated in the semi-finals by the fan-favorite Mexican Street Corn.

Postino's bruschetta bracket third battle placed Chicken Curry Salad in a hard fought cage match against the Spicy Sprout.

Despite being made with house made chicken curry salad, spicy Marcona almonds, with golden raisins and cilantro, the Chicken Curry Salad was no match for the Spicy Sprout, which is made with Calabrian chili, chives and cracked black pepper and pummeled the curry salad's breadbasket.

The final of four battles brought two sweet-style bruschetta combinations to center court.

The Strawberry Cheesecake, a product of Chef Leal from Postino Highland Ranch in Denver Colo., was constructed with vanilla bean cheesecake spread, fresh strawberries and chopped pistachios. Challenging strawberry cheesecake, Chef Nguyen's Sweet Potato Pie from Houston, Texas, featured a secret sweet potato filling with mascarpone and candied pecans.

While Winn was a fan of the Italiano, he said there was no shortage of variety in Postino's debut Battle of the Bruschetta.

"The Strawberry Cheesecake flavor was a hit among those with a sweet tooth, while the Spicy Sprout appealed to those who enjoyed a bit of heat," Winn said. "Personally, my favorite was The Italiano, although it unfortunately lost in the first round to the eventual winner, Mexican Street Corn. It just goes to show the variety and quality of flavors we offered in the competition."

*Postino Park Place is located at 2981 Michelson Dr Suite E, Irvine*