

Chefs will return to ?Kitchen Stadium? next month for second annual Iron Chef Aurora

By Brock Weir

Aurora's top chefs are getting ready to sharpen their knives and their culinary skills for the second annual Iron Chef Aurora.

The Aurora Community Centre is once again set to be transformed into Kitchen Stadium on May 29 as five chefs from five popular local restaurants square off to prepare to win over the audience with their best dishes, using their best skills to incorporate at least two secret ingredients.

The event will once again be hosted by Habachat, the local social media company, which gave the concept an Aurora flavour last year.

Organizers are spending the next few days making the final list of participating restaurants, with full details expected by the end of the week.

Last year's contenders included Maunder's Fine Foods, Oakland Hall, Edward Street Market Bistro, and Aw, Shucks, with Orchid Thai reining supreme on the popular vote with their beef and shrimp dishes.

According to Habachat founder Debbie McGrath, organizers aim to increase last year's attendance from 300 to 450 this year, in an event which will largely be modelled on last year's affair.

In July, Habachat also plans to build on the success of last year's Celebrate Aurora Music Festival which is due, pending Council approval, to once again take over Town Park in the last weekend of July, prior to the Civic Holiday Weekend.

?It will be very much a replica of last year with high quality music and entertainment, more local food choices, but we're really trying to get more local community involvement and more bands that are local ? and nicer weather,? says Ms. McGrath, referring to last year's event which was impacted by two days of rain, including a Saturday which was a near complete washout.

This year, a preference will be given to local bands and local talent ? including dancers and others who want to showcase their skills ? and applicants are invite to make their pitch by emailing info@habachat.com.

?We think we did a really good job last year,? says Ms. McGrath. ?The music was extremely high quality. We need to work on the attendance; obviously it was a weather-related issue and that we can't control, but we just pray it is nicer and we can have such good entertainment as we had last year.?

Representatives for Habachat are due to appear before Council this week to make their pitch for the use of Town Park. Responding to concerns expressed by some Councillors last week, Ms. McGrath says they would ?love? to work with the Aurora Farmers' Market to ensure it is weekend which will benefit everyone.