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SONOMA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (SIFF) ANNOUNCES FIRST RECIPIENT OF THE 2022 SIFF CULINARY EXCELLENCE AWARD

Legendary Chef, Television Host, Author, and Artist Jacques Pépin To Accept Award At SIFF's 25th Anniversary Festival March 23-27, 2022

Sonoma, CA January 12, 2022—Sonoma International Film Festival (SIFF), noted for delivering the best in film, food, wine and fun during its annual festival, will honor internationally acclaimed Chef Jacques Pépin with its first SIFF Culinary Excellence Award during the Sonoma International Film Festival's 25th anniversary festival March 23-27, 2022. The SIFF honorarium also includes a \$10,000 donation to the Jacques Pépin Foundation.

"Our 25th anniversary festival will be larger-than-life with world-class films, parties, and culinary events slated—and there are few that can compare to the larger-than-life Chef Jacques Pépin," said Kevin W. McNeely, SIFF Artistic Director. "His singular personality and gastronomic talents have changed the culinary landscape the world over, and we are honored to recognize him with our first ever SIFF Culinary Excellence Award."

Pépin is a French-born American chef, author, culinary educator, television personality, and artist. He has been honored with 24 James Beard Foundation Awards, five honorary doctoral degrees, American Public Television's Lifetime Achievement Award, the Daytime Emmy Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2019, the first culinary professional to be so honored, and the Légion d'honneur, France's highest order of merit in 2004. He has authored over 30 best-selling cookbooks. A longtime friend of Chef Julia Child, their PBS series "Julia and Jacques Cooking at Home" won a Daytime Emmy Award in 1999. He was the subject of an American Masters documentary, "Jacques Pépin: The Art Of Craft," which played at the Sonoma International Film Festival in 2018. In 2016, Pépin, along with daughter Claudine, and son-in-law Rollie Wesen, created the Jacques Pépin Foundation to support culinary education for adults with barriers to employment.

"I am very much looking forward to attending SIFF in March of 2022 and honored to be receiving the first ever SIFF Culinary Excellence Award," said Chef Pépin. "I also thank SIFF for their generous contribution to the Jacques Pepin Foundation. It will be wonderful to celebrate together in person and I'm sure I'll be reminded of the excellent time I had with Michael and Lia of Devour back in 2017. I know the Chefs & Shorts meal will be one to remember."

This special award and a retrospective of his culinary achievements, in partnership with Devour! The Food Film Fest, will be presented during the SIFF | Devour! Chefs & Shorts Special Events dinner on Thursday, March 24. Limited capacity tickets are now on sale at [SIFF Honors Chef Pépin](#).

The SIFF | Devour! Chefs & Shorts dinner features noted chefs, to be named in the coming weeks, who curate one course each, inspired by a short culinary film and paired with Sonoma Valley wines.

All SIFF Silver Patron Passes include this special event tribute and dinner. SIFF Silver Soiree and Cinema Passholders will have the opportunity to purchase a ticket at a discounted price.

About Sonoma International Film Festival

The Sonoma International Film Festival is a 501(c)3 corporation dedicated to promoting independent film, supporting filmmakers around the world, and inspiring film lovers. Blending a program of international film, food, wine and fun, SIFF hosts its annual festival each March, as well as year-round live and virtual events including SIFF Summerfest live, and SIFF Saturdays, monthly virtual films screened on the last Saturday of every month.

SIFF's signature initiative--the Media Arts Program started at Sonoma Valley High School in 2002--introduces students to the process of storytelling and provides the resources for them to create films. SIFF has granted more than \$725,000 to the program since its inception.

About Devour! The Food Film Fest

Devour! The Food Film Fest is a transformative food and film experience combining cinematic excellence with extraordinary gastronomic activities. The annual festival — the largest food film festival in the world — typically hosts 100+ events, celebrated filmmakers, and high-profile chefs from around the globe. The 12th Edition of Devour! is slated for October 24-30, 2022. For more information, please visit <https://devourfest.com/>.

About The Jacques Pépin Foundation

"We are all equal in the eyes of the stove," Chef Jacques Pépin

The Jacques Pépin Foundation supports community kitchens that offer free life skills and culinary training to adults with high barriers to employment, including previous incarceration, homelessness, substance abuse issues, low skill and education attainment and lack of work history. For more information on how to get involved or make a donation, please visit <https://jp.foundation>.

Sonoma International Film Festival celebrates 25 years March 23-27, 2022. Passes are on sale now at sonomafilmfest.org.

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