

food

scene

MATARIKI  
gala dinner and awards

**Soon the stars will all be coming out for Northland's culinary event of the year – the Matariki Indigenous Gala Dinner and Industry Awards on Friday 20 June. BRENTON LOW explains.**

Massively positive feedback was received from last year's inaugural event. People came from as far afield as Christchurch.

This year's Matariki Indigenous Gala Dinner on 20 June is an opportunity to celebrate the Maori New Year and to celebrate excellence in our Northland Hospitality industry via the Awards.

It's also a great chance to dress up. Pull out your best dress or dust off the tux and come along to a unique evening. It's open to everyone.

The big night out is the brainchild of the "Northland Chefs", a branch of the not-for-profit New Zealand Chefs Association, made up of proactive chefs, trainee chefs, training organisations, and food and beverage suppliers throughout Northland. Proceeds will go towards a Young Chef of the Year Scholarship and other activities aimed at bettering and making it easier for our young people to enter this industry.

Involved are a totally new bunch of chefs this time – with the bonus of myself and Paul Jobin running the kitchen, along with a number of others, including an award-winning 'front of house' team who are all volunteering their time.

The Northland chefs on show this year are:

**RENE ARCHNER** (from Vibrant Earth Creations, Opua); **KEITH PASLEY**, Heron Hill Hospitality, Kerikeri; **NEIL BRAZIER**, Salt Brassiere, Paihia; **LUIS BRANCO**, Portobello Restaurant, Kingsgate Hotel, Whangarei; and **ANNA VALENTINE**, from Temptations Catering, Kerikeri.

The 'brief' is to create dishes using Northland grown or sourced ingredients, adding a sprinkle of indigenous style – and that's the easy part.

Knowing you'll be cooking in front of hundreds of eager 'foodies' and your peers has got to be a little daunting, but these guys and girl are seasoned professionals who do this every day. It will be great to see what they come up with.

Wines for the evening will be supplied and expertly matched by the Northland Wine Growers Association.

We have scored something of a coup by securing TV personality **April Ieremia** (from the *April in the Afternoon* show on The Living Channel) as our Master of Ceremonies.

Tickets are \$130 per person inclusive of food and wine for the dinner. Book and pay for a table of 10 and your own ticket is free!

Tickets may be purchased from:

**à Deco Restaurant** 021 2699444, Whangarei

**Salt Brasserie** 09 402 6199, Paihia

**Finders Café** 09 407 3160, Kerikeri

If you prefer, you can reserve your ticket by email: [a\\_deco@xtra.co.nz](mailto:a_deco@xtra.co.nz)

Matariki, the Maori New Year, is about celebrating the unique place in which we live and giving respect to the land we live upon. This is why we have chosen Matariki to showcase our exciting industry. ■

Photos: Bryce Zhang

LOCAL PADDLE CRAB & MAORI POTATO TIAN WITH PUHA PESTO, RADISH & WATERCRESS



**Wednesday Italian Festa!** \$18<sup>pp</sup>  
Dinner for two. Share welcome snack, bowl of pasta and glass of Italian wine only

*Amici*

*Italian Café & Restaurant  
Gelateria*

Open Tue – Sat, 10am – late

en en en en en en en en en en en en

Breakfast • Lunch • Afternoon Snack • Dinner

Shop13, Quality Street, Whangarei Ph 09 438 2961