



Who Doesn't Love a Biscuit?

The International Biscuit Festival rises again. **BY GAY LYONS**

THE SECOND ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL BISCUIT FESTIVAL, downtown Knoxville, May 26-28, celebrates the heritage of home cooking through that most perfect of foods: the Biscuit. This year's schedule includes favorites from last year as well as a hot new event, the Biscuit Benefit Fundraiser hosted by Blackberry Farm with Guest Chef Michelle Bernstein.

The Pre-Heat Show features **The Cleverlys** and their unique mixture of instrumental prowess and tongue in cheek humor. (8pm, Thursday, May 26, Square Room at 4 Market Square, \$15 at thesquareroom.com or as part of a Biscuit Bundle)

Begin Saturday at the **Biscuit Breakfast**, presented by Hardees. (Saturday, May 28, 9-11 pm, \$10 at the door or as part of the Basic Biscuit Bundle). For a fine dining experience, start the day with the **Blackberry Brunch**, where the chefs at world-renowned Blackberry Farm will prepare "Foothills Cuisine." (Saturday, May 28, 11-1 pm, \$125 in advance biscuitfest.com or as part of the Better Biscuit Bundle)

One ticket to **Biscuit Boulevard** buys samples from some of the best Biscuit bakers around. (Saturday, May 28, 10am-4pm, \$5 at the Biscuit Booth on site or as part of a Biscuit Bundle.) Visit the **Biscuit Bazaar** or watch top Biscuit makers compete at the **Biscuit Bake Off**. Last year's Grand Champion was the "Fat Elvis Biscuit," a Peanut Butter, Banana and Bacon delight fit for a King, which was featured in the May 2011 issue of *Southern Living*. (Saturday, May 28, 1-5 pm)

Biscuit talent, Biscuit poise, and Biscuit making skills all come into play at the **Mr. and Ms. Biscuit Pageant**. (Saturday, May 28, 1 pm). A bonanza of **Biscuit Arts and En-**

tertainment takes place throughout the weekend.

Finish the festival with a concert by **The Black Lillies with Tift Merritt** at the Bijou Theatre. Their sound is earthy, gritty and melancholy in the way mountain music was a century ago. (Saturday, May 28, 8 pm, \$25 at knoxbijou.com or as part of a Biscuit Bundle).

The best way to experience the festival is through purchase of a Biscuit Bundle — on sale now at biscuitfest.com. The **Basic Biscuit Bundle** (\$85) includes tickets to the Biscuit Breakfast, Biscuit Boulevard, The Cleverlys, The Black Lillies, Biscuit Tee, and Biscuit Poster. The **Better Biscuit Bundle** (\$200) includes tickets to the Blackberry Brunch, Biscuit Boulevard, The Cleverlys, The Black Lillies, Biscuit Tee, and Biscuit Poster. Purchase of either Bundle includes a ticket to the **Biscuit Blast Off**, a private event for Bake Off participants, judges, and demonstrators, authors, and other special guests. (Friday, May 27, 6-10 pm, The Square Room).

New this year is the **Biscuit Benefit Fundraiser**, hosted by Blackberry Farm with **Guest Chef Michelle Bernstein**. A Miami native of Jewish and Latin descent, Michelle Bernstein, a James Beard Foundation award-winning chef, has dazzled diners and critics with her cuisine and personality. She was previously a co-host of the Food Network series "Melting Pot" and was once in a battle on Iron Chef America versus Bobby Flay, from which she emerged victorious. In 2005, Bernstein and her husband, David Martinez, opened Michy's, declared one of the "Top 50 Restaurants in the Country" by *Gourmet* and dubbed "Best New Restaurant 2006" by *Food & Wine*. This fund raising event will benefit Share Our Strength, a national nonprofit working to end childhood hunger in America, and Second Harvest, which meets the demands of those struggling with hunger in East Tennessee. (7 pm Friday, May 27, S&W, \$150 per person at biscuitfest.com)

THE DETAILS

WHAT: International Biscuit Festival

WHEN: May 26-28

WHERE: Various venues in downtown Knoxville

INFO: biscuitfest.com



Chef Michelle Bernstein