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FOOD EDITORS RELEASE

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Back-to-Back Grand Prize Titles

Winners Announced in “Get Wild with Wild Rice” Recipe Contest

Pamela Gelsomini of Wrentham, MA, earned the first ever back-to-back grand prize in the “*Get Wild with Wild Rice*” recipe contest with her *Beef & Shiitake Wild Rice Umami Stir Fry*, a delicious one-pan dish offering great taste and simplicity in one easy-to-prepare creation.

Last year Pamela was one of two contestants who tied for the 2021 grand prize in the Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council’s “*Get Wild with Wild Rice*” recipe contest with her delicious *Date Night Wild Rice Tarts* recipe. After a tie for first, she was even more determined in 2022 and her efforts resulted in the first ever back-to-back grand prize win.

After 12 years, the contest has attracted participants from all corners of the country submitting recipes running the gamut from traditional to creative in the categories of appetizers, soups, salads, entrées, & sides, demonstrating both the great taste and versatility of wild rice. Recipes went head-to-head in a taste test conducted by culinary specialists who narrowed the field to 14 finalists competing for two awards - a Grand Prize awarded by a panel of judges headed by Chef Ken Goff and a People’s Choice Award given to the finalist garnering the most online votes during September’s National Rice Month.

In addition to Gelsomini’s back-to-back grand prize win, Laura Kurella of Wellston, MI, won the Council’s coveted People’s Choice Award with her creatively sweet ‘*Popped*’ *Espresso Mocha Pillow Crisps*, perfect for a distinctive dessert or a healthy snack. All contest finalists were featured on the Council’s website for a public vote to determine the People’s Choice Award. Laura also was awarded the Council’s ‘*Golden Ticket*’ to the *World Food Championships* and will be competing in Dallas, TX, in November.

One of the region’s most influential chefs, Ken Goff, led a panel of judges charged with the difficult task of selecting which recipe would take home the grand prize. Relying on his more than four decades-worth of culinary experience and training, Goff and the judges ultimately chose *Beef & Shiitake Wild Rice Umami Stir Fry* as the Grand Prize Winner in an extremely close race. Goff noted it stood out for its Asian-inspired flair, great combination of flavors and textures, and ease of preparation. “It’s my pick for number one!”

Grand Prize Winner – *Beef & Shiitake Wild Rice Umami Stir Fry* (Pamela Gelsomini, Wrentham, MA)

With its “wildly” delicious array of ingredients, *Beef & Shiitake Wild Rice Umami Stir Fry* combines wild rice with sirloin, shiitake mushrooms, onion, garlic, soy sauce, eggs, scallions, and fresh pea pods, all prepared in one pan. Umami means “essence of deliciousness” in Japanese, and this recipe has it in spades!

People’s Choice Winner – ‘*Popped*’ *Espresso Mocha Pillow Crisps* (Laura Kurella, Wellston, MI)

Soft, sweet marshmallows coated in chocolate, espresso powder, cinnamon, and ‘popped’ wild rice, ‘*Popped*’ *Espresso Mocha Pillow Crisps* are guaranteed to be one of the most unique and delicious desserts your guests have ever tried. Use as the perfect finish to an upscale meal or a healthy snack for kids on the go.

(The Council’s website is home to the world’s largest online wild rice recipe library. To view the recipes of any of the 2022 finalists, visit mnwildrice.org/search.php - “Contest Finalist” category.)

The Council's latest recipe brochure, *Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Recipes & Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*, features contest winning recipes including soups, appetizers, salads, entrées, sides, and desserts & snacks. To receive your free copy send a self-addressed-stamped-envelope to: Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council, Newest Recipes, 4630 Churchill St #1, St. Paul, MN 55126.

BEEF & SHIITAKE WILD RICE UMAMI STIR FRY

Pamela Gelsomini Wrentham, MA

- ½ lb beef sirloin, cut into very thin strips across the grain
- 5 tbsp canola oil, divided
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 8 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup finely chopped carrots
- ½ lb shiitake mushrooms, stems discarded and caps sliced
- ¼ cup dry sherry
- 3 eggs
- 3 cups cooked wild rice
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- ¼ cup oyster sauce
- ½ tsp ground black pepper
- 1 cup pea pods, packed
- 1½ cups bean sprouts, packed
- ½ cup chopped scallions

In large skillet, stir-fry sirloin in 3 tbsp oil; season with salt. Remove; set aside. In drippings, sauté onion and garlic, 2 minutes. Stir in carrots and mushrooms; cook 5 minutes. Stir in sherry until absorbed; push to side of skillet. Add remaining oil to open side. Scramble eggs until mostly cooked; toss with mushroom mixture. Stir in sirloin, wild rice, soy sauce, oyster sauce, pepper, and pea pods; cook 3 minutes. Add sprouts and scallions just before serving; toss. 4 servings.

'POPPED' ESPRESSO MOCHA PILLOW CRISPS

Laura Kurella, Wellston, MI

- 1 cup well-cooked wild rice
- canola oil for deep frying
- ¼ tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp espresso powder
- 1 cup semi-sweet mini chocolate chips
- ½ tsp each: vegetable shortening and sea salt
- 12 regular marshmallows, cut in half to form 2 narrow circles
- 24 long toothpicks

Preheat oven to 250°F. On large parchment-lined rimmed baking sheet, spread wild rice. Bake 2 hours or until completely dry; toss occasionally. Place in bowl. In high-sided frying pan, heat ~2" oil to 370°F. In batches, use mesh spoon to lower wild rice into oil until it pops and floats to the top, ~15 seconds. Remove; place on paper towel. Repeat. In medium bowl, toss popped wild rice, cinnamon, and espresso powder; set aside. In small bowl, microwave chocolate chips, shortening, and salt in 15-second increments; stir until completely melted. Put toothpick in each marshmallow; coat in chocolate. Press all sides into wild rice; set on parchment-lined serving dish. Chill until served. 6 servings.

Note: 'Popped' wild rice is an excellent snack on its own. Just toss with your favorite seasoning (e.g., garlic salt, sea salt, ground black pepper)

Note to Editor:

For a high-resolution electronic copy of the photos, call or email our office.

Due to limited funds, we are unable to utilize a clipping service. Run our release and send us a copy — we'll return the favor by sending you a 1/2 pound of cultivated wild rice. If you cannot accept the wild rice, we'd still appreciate a clipping to show our growers — ***thanks!***

Readers responding to the brochure offer receive a “Mail Order Supplier” list along with the 2022-2023 *Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Recipes and Answers to Often Asked Questions* brochure. Due to limited funding, readers need to send a business size self-addressed-stamped-envelope to:

Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council

Newest Recipes
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Beef & Shiitake Wild Rice Umami Stir Fry

Credit: Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council



Popped Espresso Mocha Pillow Crisps

Credit: Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council

