



# THE BITE OF OREGON

LIFE TASTES BETTER HERE



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## **Oregon's Largest Culinary Event Kicks-Off Year Twenty-Eight**

Making a great Portland event even better is the goal of Oregon's top culinary festival, the Bite of Oregon, now in its 28<sup>th</sup> year. Nearly 48,000 foodies, Oregon wine and Oregon craft beer lovers will descend on Portland's Waterfront Park August 12<sup>th</sup> through 14<sup>th</sup> and experience some of Oregon's best. Year twenty-eight promises to build on the major changes of recent years with an expanded SYSCO Oregon Chef's Stage, celebrity chef, Iron Chef Oregon competitions, newly expanded Gerry Frank's Oregon Chef's Table, Dessert Pavilion, Oregon Wine Pavilion, and the growing Oregon Craft Beer Garden.

Combining many of Portland's most popular restaurants, bands, and comedians with Oregon's premiere wineries for a few days of fun every August was the brainchild of local festival producer, Clay Fuller. In 1984, armed with a city park permit to "utilize a Portland park for the benefit of raising funds for a recognized non-profit organization", Fuller teamed with beneficiary, Special Olympics Oregon, to create the most successful festival model the metropolitan area has ever known.

The Bite has laid claim to jumpstarting the careers of many now nationally known musicians, providing a stepping stone for local comedians and street performers. The event has introduced hundreds of new dishes from dozens of new and established restaurants, helped establish the popularity of the Oregon wine industry, and, most importantly, raised millions of dollars for Special Olympics Oregon.

But like most fledgling enterprises, The Bite did not begin its life with 50,000 + attendees packing the park or the most respected Oregon wineries clamoring for precious booth space. A quick retrospective glance at the festival's history reveals a modest launch but a rapid ascension to success. Let's take a look.

**1984** - The inaugural festival featured 23 Portland restaurants, 6 Oregon wineries, 1 comedian, and 23 bands. Music headliners featured Cool'R, Jack Charles/Mien Street, Crazy Eights and the venerable Johnny Limbo and the Lugnuts. An original sponsor that year included Maletis Inc/Columbia Distributing. Fuller's wife, Sheri, was charged with garbage collection, a duty she still talks about with pride. With a suggested \$1 donation at the gate, the festival netted \$14,000 for Special Olympics Oregon (then known as Oregon Special Olympics.) Of the 23 restaurants showcased, 11 are still in business today.

**1985** - Music is expanded to 34 acts while SOOR garners \$25,000 in net proceeds. Over 200 SOOR volunteers assist with the festivities. As a side note, ten minutes before the festival is about to open for Friday's lunch, the electric power goes out in the park. The shutdown animates Clay Fuller, who personally generates enough kinetic energy to light the entire city. The lack of dependable power for the event lights a fire under the Portland City Council to install permanent natural gas and power lines in Waterfront Park.

**1986** - The popular "Tasty Licks" stage comes on board at the west end of the park. Performers include Curtis Salgado, Dub DeBrie and Gary Ogan. Johnny Limbo, Rockin' Razorbacks, and the up and coming, Dan Reed Network, star on the Main Stage. Blackened Chicken on Angel Hair pasta from the now defunct Blue Max won the Best Entrée award while Lobster Tail from the equally defunct, Vini's, came in a close second. The Oregonian's A&E entertainment page debuted on August 17, 1986 with The Bite as the first ever cover lead story. Special Olympics realized \$33,000 with over 70,000 in attendance.

**1988** - In only its fifth year, The Bite has been dubbed Portland's major metropolitan gathering, rivaled only by the Portland Rose Festival (which had an 80-year head start). 61 bands, including Tom Grant's first of 15 appearances, and the West Coast Chamber Orchestra, elevate the festivities. New Kids on the Block makes a memorable appearance as an upstart touring band from New York at 5pm on Sunday. Blues lovers pay no attention to the pop frenzy at the other end of the park as Chicago and Delta blues are driving the Tasty Licks stage. Pasta is king on restaurant row with at least four of 24 eateries dishing up the Italian staple. Suggested entry donation goes to \$2 and \$83,000 is distributed to SOOR sports programs for Oregon's mentally retarded.

**1989** - The Waterfront Park footprint of The Bite now stretches from Morrison Bridge to SW Pine Street. The Oregon Wine Pavilion come into its own with 16 Oregon wineries pouring their very finest. Pop/rock on Friday, Jazz/World Music on Saturday, and Blues on Sunday remain a constant. Donations top \$90,000.

**1990** - Attendance tops 125, 000 as Body & Soul, Killing Field, and Quarterflash headline the Main Stage. 28 restaurants deliver everything from Cajun Café's Blackened Chateaubriand to Piccolo Mondo's Death by Chocolate. The now omnipresent Jana's Cookies debuts at the event while over 22 Oregon wineries establish The Bite as one of the State's largest wine tastings. The magic \$100,000 net proceeds mark for SOOR is broken for the first time.

**1991** - The Chinese army was expected this year, and if it did show up, The Bite was ready with Hombon, hot & sour soup, and Mongolian stir-fry. Over 155,000 local souls did show up, however. Zydeco master, CJ Chenier, brought his late father's legendary group, the Red Hot Louisiana Band, and smoked-up the park at 6pm on Saturday. The Children's Stage made its inaugural three-day voyage with mimes, jugglers and fire-eaters. Come to think of it, the Teppanyaki Chicken at Kyoto's made fire-eaters out of many that year.

**1992** - The annual feeding frenzy featured over 80 acts on five stages. One of the new venues was the Oil Can Henry's Comedy Stage starring national comedic headliner, Bob Zany. OCH Comedy Stage remains one of the event's most popular entertainment options. Toad the Wet Sprocket brought its national fame and crazy name. Not to be outdone, local bands Bop Girl Goes Calypso and Klaus Roehm and The Uncouth Truth tout their zaniness. SOOR volunteers now number near 700 and help raise \$165,000 for local Special Olympic chapters.

**1993** - The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual affair celebrates in high style with performances from the legendary Richie Havens and Buddy Miles. Millstone Coffee presents The Bite Blend coffee in their whole bean selection in grocery stores across the state. It becomes an immediate best seller. Budweiser pours its 200<sup>th</sup> keg of brew and Oregon wineries enjoy record sales. Milestones are recognized at the gate as well: over 175,000 patrons helped raise over \$190,000.

**1994** - Oregon's premier wine and food fest set the table for 200,000 visitors. The once unthinkable goal of raising \$200,000 for Special Olympics Oregon becomes a reality after 11 years. Over 800 Bite volunteers and 31 sponsors have a big hand in the success. Jefferson Starship, 25 years removed from their triumph at Woodstock, pack Waterfront Park during their primetime, 9pm, Sunday slot. Fuller, who attended the original Woodstock music fest in 1969, doesn't remember hearing the band at that event, however.

**1995** - One of the hottest dishes in Bite history makes its debut: Casa Ubetcha's Jalapeno Poppers light up the taste buds as a huge firework spectacular illuminates the Friday night sky. New wineries (Wasson Brothers and Callahan Ridge), new comedian headliners (Judy Gold and John Padon), new restaurants (McGrath's Fish House and Tribeca) mix with the familiar names and make for a great time.

**1997** - Z100 radio, once again, sponsors the best fireworks demonstration this side of the 4<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 Friday night following a burning set by Curtis Salgado. Curtis and Tom Grant hold The Bite record for the most festival appearances to date. VH-1 sets-up shop and presents Bare Naked Ladies to a capacity crowd of mostly fully clothed rock fans. The World Footbag Championships (with its roots in Portland) takes place at the festival. 1190KEX radio's "Singing in the Shower" stage draws hundreds of listeners hoping to hear those who sing worse than they do.

**1998** - The Quarterflash reunion concert brings back memories and fills the park Saturday night with the band's avid and longstanding fans. Lydia Pense and Cold Blood did the same on Friday night. VH-1 returns for year two of their "Rock Across America" tour and sponsors the most popular band ever to play the event, Cheap Trick on Sunday evening. Other VH-1 performers included Bon Jovi's Richie Sambora, Tommy Tutone and Color Me Badd. The new Chef's Stage becomes a reality with the "Summer Cook-Off" starring local favorites Jackie Winters and Junkie Yoshida. Bite volunteers wear their free Bite T-Shirts and enjoy a free entrée for their valuable services. SOOR continues to enjoy record donations and net proceeds.

**1999** - Horn of Africa was awarded best entrée with their Lukkuu (spicy chicken) dish. Jest in Time Circus of Fools takes the kids entertainment to a new level and the laughs just get louder at the OHC Comedy Pavilion with Bob Zany and Ron Osborne. Lots of great interactive displays from the Oregon Historical Society, Revlon, Ford, and Blockbuster keep attendees busy when not eating, drinking or dancing. The stars from "Down Under" Men-at-Work and The Romantics rock the park to its foundation.

**2000** - A record number of sponsors, lead by Safeway stores as the new presenting sponsor, want exposure at the Festival. National companies like Discover Card, Barnes & Noble and Mentor Graphics get valuable exposure and assist SOOR in achieving their fundraising goals. Ageless boogie wonders, Canned Heat (Fuller does remember hearing *them* at Woodstock!), play a killer set that has the Friday night throng screaming for more. Mary Wilson, late of The Supremes, turns in a phenomenal Sunday afternoon set of Motown gems, and then signs autographs near the stage for over two hours afterwards.

**2001** - Special Olympics Oregon welcomes Safeway as the first title sponsor in the festival's 18-year history. This was the year of the singer-songwriter as Michele Branch and Jon Ondrasik drew thousands of 20-somethings to their Friday and Saturday performances. Not to be outdone, plenty of 30 and 40-somethings hauled out their disco wardrobe and got-down with KC & the Sunshine Band. Chef Reza Rafati delivers one of the event's most elegant menus with items like Tomato Basil on Boursin and Roasted Asparagus and Shallots on Gorgonzola. A long way from pepperoni pizza by the slice.

**2002** - For the first time, the festival moves from mid-August to Labor Day Weekend. Clear Channel Events comes on board as a major Bite supporter and brings headliners Everclear, Randy Travis and the Neville Brothers to the stage. Z100's popular Last Chance Summer Dance becomes folded into The Bite as one day of the now 4-day event. The Oregon Wine Pavilion takes on greater status with a fully judged, six category wine competition amongst its participants. SOOR volunteers (now over 800) continue to devote hundreds of hours of time. T-Shirt sales reach an all-time record as award-winning art coordinator, Michael Beard, continues to deliver world-class theme art for the event.

**2003** - NBA Hall of Famer, Bill Walton, lead the festivities on the Oil Can Henry's stage celebrating the event's illustrious twenty year history. Walton stayed on stage for another two hours with an improv comedy group. The main stage was packed with cultural heavyweights such as Dr. John, BeauSoleil, The Blind Boys of Alabama, Papa Grows Funk and Dirty Dozen Brass Band. Chefs such as Sean Jorgensen of Salty's on the Columbia, Eric Laslow, owner of Laslow's Northwest (*the 2002 Oregonian Restaurant of the Year*), Marco Shaw, owner of Fife Restaurant, Adam Higgs, Executive Chef at Acadia and eight others demonstrated their skills. The Wine Pavilion was expanded to accommodate 28 Oregon wineries.

**2004** - The Special Olympics Oregon staff becomes involved as Bite producers during this landmark year. The name is officially changed to "The Bite of Oregon" and the selection of thirty-four restaurants and fifteen chefs from around the state (many as far away as La Grande, Bend, Ashland and Astoria) back-up the new moniker. The state was split into seven tasting regions with over 100 menu items, many priced under \$3. Thirty Oregon wineries represented all but one of the state's viticulture regions. For the first time, delicacies prepared by in cooking demonstrations by celebrity chefs were artfully paired with savory Oregon wines. New entry ways, regional towers, staging, and uniform tenting gave a new look. Entertainment also came from around the state with the highlight Friday night concert starring, "They Might Be Giants".

**2005** - A new year brings many new features none more important than the new *Iron Chef Oregon* competition held on the newly expanded Oregon Chef's Stage. Chef Daniel Mondok from Carlyle Restaurant battled Chef Pascal Sauton, owner of Carafe, with the former winning the first ever Golden Cleaver award. Pacific Coast Restaurants sold a record 5, 000 crabcakes while the Oregon Shakespearian Festival actors entertained for the first time outside

**(2005 continued)** Ashland during their season. Record breaking crowds were on-hand Friday evening to be one with The Decemberists and Violent Femmes. At one point, the gates had to be closed to Waterfront Park due to capacity limits reached.

**2006** - The Iron Chef Oregon competition which began in 2005 was notched up another gear and became a two-day, two round event. Reigning Champion Daniel Mondok successfully defended his crown on the expanded Sysco Oregon Chef's Stage. Los Lobos and Anna Nalick headlined big shows on Friday and Saturday respectively while the Entercom station, 105.1 The Buzz, carried off a hugely popular Nelson and Terry Summer Talent Tour. However, this year's Festival may be forever remembered for what did *not* take place...namely the cancellation of Sunday's headlining act, Snow Patrol. The band was forced to cancel its Bite performance due to a terrorist threat closing London's airports. Despite this setback, Sunday's attendance exceeded the previous year by a considerable amount. The Bite's Sunday tie-into the Providence Bridge Pedal event certainly contributed to that positive number.

**2007** - In the first twenty-three years the signature of The Bite was a headlining musical act or acts that strutted their stuff on the big Main Stage. 2007 did have those headlining musical bands and for the first time one of the major entertainers couldn't play an instrument or sing a note but he could certainly dish-up some mean Polenta della Toscana. Chef Guy Fieri, rising star of the Food Network, wowed the crowds on Friday and Saturday on SYSCO Chef's stage followed by a huge line-up of autograph seekers and just plain admirers. Daniel Mondok, for the third year running, came away with the Iron Chef Oregon title even though the contest was expanded to include five chefs from around the state. The main stage on Sunday did not disappoint the classic rockers as the legendary Patti Smith brought her New York ensemble to Portland and lit it up for a nearly two hour set of new and vintage material.

**2008** - What do you get when you bring in one of America's top celebrity chefs, mix in a little Iron Chef Oregon competition and have it all cooked-up on the newly expanded Oregon Chef's Stage? The Bite audience receives one of the most exciting Portland culinary experiences of the year! The Food Network's Iron Chef America Cat Cora packed the Sysco Oregon Chef Stage with her patented high energy presentation and assisted in hosting the Iron Chef Oregon competition...first time winner was Chef Neil Clooney from Ashland. The stage also featured the famed Junki Yoshida, on-going cooking demos and Jr. Iron Chef Oregon. Over 60 bands on three stages preformed throughout the festival highlighted by the Crazy 8's opening night headliner show on 8-8-08. 2008 marked The Bite's first \$10 glass of wine in the MIX Wine Pavilion – Bite Gold Medal winning Eola Hills Pinot Noir which sold for \$50 a bottle and soldout long before the Festival's conclusion. Also new this year was the Oregon Brewed Craft Beer Garden featuring 11 Oregon craft brewers with over 22 selections poured including the world premiere of Rogue Ales' Double Dead Guy Ale. Newman's fresh Oregon Dungeness Crabcakes once again sold like hot cakes. Other entries included Bay Shrimp Salad and Scallop Ceviche, Grilled Moroccan Spiced Prawns, Kobe Beef Sliders and Penne Rosa.

**2009** – Three days of perfect “eating weather” greeted festival goers as the temperatures stayed in the comfortable 70s. Chef Rock Harper, season 3 winner of Fox TV's “Hell's Kitchen” worked his culinary magic on the Oregon Chef's Stage Saturday and Sunday. Rock was also the deciding factor in the closest Iron Chef Oregon competition of all time as two Ashland chefs, Franco Console and reigning ICO, Neil Clooney, battled it out for the Shun cleaver and bragging rights. After a heated half-hour Iron Chef dual the two ended-up in a tie for points with Chef Rock then casting his vote for Chef Clooney. 2009 also featured the largest collection of Oregon wineries ever to appear at the event as 38 superb vintners sample and sold the fruits of their labor. Newcomer, Stoller Vineyards & Winery, stole the show with their 2006 Pinot Noir.

**2010** – One of most innovative years in the history of the event with *three* new features introduced with great success: Gerry Frank's Oregon Chef's Table, the Dessert Pavilion, and Portland Food Cart Cuisine. Combine these elements with Food Network celebrity chef and Olympic Gold Medalist, Brian Boitano, a new Oregon's best Chili and Chocolate Cake sampling, and a special appearance by world eating champion, Joey Chesnut, and attendees found out why this Bite will be hard to forget. The Chef's Table allowed small, boutique-style restaurants and their chefs to sample dishes on-site with a limited number of portions for only \$3 each. It was a smash hit with most participants selling out. VooDoo Donuts hung-up "Sorry, Sold Out" sign each day in the popular new Dessert Pavilion while long lines formed for Gerry Frank's Konditorei cake slices. Garden State, Koi Fusion PDX, PBJ's, Whiffies Fried Pies and Burgerville Nomad will hold the distinction of being The Bite's first-ever food carts on-site...capturing the local cart scene rage! Best of Show in the MIX Wine Pavilion was Zerba Cellars 2007 Mourvedre besting over 104 entries for that title. Iron Chef Oregon competitions came down to the final taste with Chef Gabriel Gil of Eugene walking away with the hallowed ICO Shun Cleaver. Portland Blues legend, Curtis Salgado, closed out the event on Sunday night with a powerful, soulful show on the Garden Stage.

**2011 and Beyond** - Building on a very successful 27-year legacy, the 2011 Bite of Oregon promises to deliver another smash hit festival this year and the years ahead. Celebrating Oregon's unique food, wine, craft beers and entertainment will continue to be the guiding position of the event. Corporate sponsors, volunteers and attendees make it possible.

Looking back can be fun and eye opening but looking to the future has always kept the event fresh and relevant. And most importantly, The Bite of Oregon continues as a successful fundraiser for Special Olympics Oregon and the thousands of mentally disabled athletes that it serves.

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The Bite of Oregon is produced and Benefits:



**Special Olympics**  
*Oregon*