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## 2017 AUSTRALIAN CELEBRITY CHEF COOKING CONTEST KICKS OFF AUSTRALIA DAY IN ASPEN SNOWMASS DURING SNOWSTORM



*Chefs Kori Sutton, Troy Selby, Christopher Randall, Matt Moran, Chris "Gerber" Mathie, Oscar Carrasco and Nate King, with MC Jane Flemming.*

**Aspen Snowmass (January 11, 2017)** – It was as much snow-fest as Master Chef in Aspen this week, as more than a foot of snow blanketed the slopes, coinciding with the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Australian Celebrity Cooking Contest, an invite-only event, presented by Aspen Snowmass, The Little Nell and Residences at The Little Nell on Tuesday, Jan. 10. Held in advance of Australia Day proper, the original concept behind the contest was to “cook up” excitement for Australia Day. It has now become a beloved tradition among visiting Australians, expats residing in Aspen, and Australia enthusiasts.

Past challenges have been Pavlova (2014), Meat Pie (2015), and Lamington (2016) while past celebrity judges have been Celebrity Chef Neil Perry, his wife, Sam Perry, and Olympic silver and gold medalist snowboarder Torah Bright. For 2017, the theme was ‘Shrimp on the Barbie,’ with **Australian Celebrity Chef Matt Moran**, who has judged many televised competitions from MasterChef to Heat in the Kitchen to The Chopping Block, presided over the competition to determine the winner with the “best prawns.” Former Australian Olympic track and field star, **Jane Fleming, served as emcee.**

Chefs from six restaurants in the Aspen Snowmass area took part, each asked to prepare their best ‘Shrimp on the Barbie’ dish for the judge and upwards of 60 guests. Competitors included:

- Ajax Tavern - Chef Chris “Gerber” Mathie
- Cache Cache - Chef Nate King
- 520 Grill - Chef Troy Selby
- The Limelight Hotel - Chef Christopher Randall
- The Little Nell - Chef Oscar Carrasco
- The St. Regis Aspen - Chef Kori Sutton

The event was staged at the festively-decorated Chair 9 après-ski bar at The Little Nell with a DJ spinning top Aussie tracks. Guests enjoyed wine, beer and “Aussie-tinis,” a signature Champagne Punch in the colors of the Australian flag, while sampling the shrimp dishes. After a blind taste test, Chef Matt Moran cast his vote for each dish with scores based on the following criteria, weighted equally for each category: Aroma, Appearance, Consistency/Texture and Taste.

Creativity ruled for the day, with **Champion Chef Nate King of Cache Cache** for his Charred Wild Ecuadorian Shrimp with Mango-Lime-Miso Sauce & Ginger/Scallion. King was pleased with his first place win, noting he now “needs to visit Australia,” having never been. **Chris “Gerber” Mathie of Ajax Tavern came in second** with his appetite-whetting Green Curry Grilled Shrimp, and **Oscar Carrasco of host venue The Little Nell came in third** with his dish, Shrimp and Citrus. **Chef Christopher Randall of The Limelight captured the Audience Favorite Award** for his dish, Chimichurri-Marinated Carolina White Shrimp.

The Little Nell’s Managing Director, Australian Simon Chen, said. “After our win last year with the Lamington, we were hopeful for a repeat victory. Clinching second and third place for prawns will do just fine as an alternative. Congratulations to Cache Cache and Chef Nate.”

Aspen Snowmass sets the bar as one of the most festive resort settings in the world to celebrate Australia Day with all four ski areas - Aspen Mountain, Aspen Highlands, Buttermilk and Snowmass – hosting activities and festivities on Australia Day proper, Thursday, Jan. 26. Celebrations kick off at Aspen Mountain with the Silver Queen Gondola opening one hour early at 8 am, where free vegemite toast will be served until 9am. At all four mountain bases, Guest Services will issue Tim Tams, Aussie flags and stickers, with Aussie tunes from chairlift tower speakers and lift stations to get skiers in the mood. The Southern Cross flag will be raised atop Highland Bowl at Aspen Highlands at 11,675 feet and keep an eye out for Aussie road signs on gondolas and mountain trails.

Taste buds will be tingling with participating on-mountain restaurants featuring BBQs including sausage sizzles, Snags & Beer lunch specials, and Aussie Burgers with beetroot, pineapple and fried eggs. Joey, Aspen Snowmass’ skiing kangaroo, will be on the slopes with the Aspen Gondola Plaza serving Lamingtons between 3 – 4 pm and the [Aussie Day Closing Festivities at Chair 9 at The Little Nell](#), the perfect book-end to the festivities.

A compilation of video footage in Vimeo and B-Roll of the Shrimp on the Barbie Contest featuring Chef Matt Moran, as well as the skiing kangaroo and Australia Day celebrations will be available January 25 for January 26 release.

***Chef's Bio: Matt Moran*** is an Australian chef, restaurateur, author and television personality and judge, with more than 30 years in the food industry, a plethora of awards to his name, a handful of best-selling cookbooks and the tour de force behind some of Australia's most celebrated dining establishments including ARIA Sydney, ARIA Brisbane and more.

***Images of the Shrimp on the Barbie Contest:***

<https://aspensnowmass.imagerelay.com/sb/23e1bf1e-8dc8-4e3c-b6eb-f8be1b58692f>

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***Aspen Skiing Company*** operates the four mountains in the Aspen Snowmass area - Snowmass, Aspen Mountain, Aspen Highlands and Buttermilk - as well as the award-winning Ski & Snowboard Schools of Aspen Snowmass. For more information on Aspen Skiing Company, please call 800-525-6200 or 970-925-1220, or visit the company's website at [www.aspensnowmass.com](http://www.aspensnowmass.com).

***The Little Nell*** is cosmopolitan yet intimate, contemporary yet timeless, inviting guests to experience Aspen's only Forbes Five-Star, AAA Five-Diamond, ski-in/ski-out hotel – a Relais & Châteaux resort. For more information and for reservations, please call 888.The.Nell (888.843.6355) or visit [www.thelittlenell.com](http://www.thelittlenell.com).

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