

More chefs, more competition

By Times Staff

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The Seafood Throwdown event has proven so popular at Cape Ann Farmers Market that organizers now say they have enough contestants for the rest of the season — with the finale coinciding with the market's last day on Oct. 9.

For each throwdown, two local chefs each design a meal around a mystery seafood ingredient. Each is given 15 minutes and \$25 to spend at the market, then an hour to prepare, cook and serve the meal to randomly chosen customers from the Farmers Market crowd.

This Thursday's Seafood Throwdown, dubbed "The Main Street Brawl," will feature Chef Eric Landry of Passports and Chef Joe Schulz of Dog Bar, both on Main Street. Judging their dishes will be Boston celebrity chef Didi Emmons of Veggie Planet and Haley House Caf ; and Michael Wheeler, founder of Dancingspoon.com, "the Facebook for Foodies!" and the opening and creative development partner in FINZ Restaurant in Salem.

"Our original idea was to have two or three events and see how it goes," said Jessica Hayes, the market's general manager. "The response from the Farmers Market customers and the larger community has been so positive that we decided to add more dates. When people began asking 'When is the next Throwdown?' we knew we had to keep going."

Seafood Throwdown was the brainchild of the partnership between the Cape Ann Farmers Market and Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance (NAMA) as a way of promoting locally caught seafood and gauging the community's interest in Community Supported Fisheries (CSF).

Tailored after the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model, a CSF brings freshly caught local seafood to our kitchens while providing fishermen with a better price on less catch. CSF members give the fishermen financial support in advance, and in turn the fishermen provide a weekly share of locally caught seafood to their shareholders.

"Farmers Market customers already get the significance of eating sustainably and supporting local food producers," Hayes said. "So it makes perfect sense for the market to highlight the importance of locally caught seafood to our customers. Seafood Throwdowns are a fun, engaging way of doing just that."

Beyond this Thursday, future Seafood Throwdowns are now scheduled for tomorrow, 18 and Oct. 2 and 9 at the Farmers Market on Harbor Loop.

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At the Cape Ann Farmer's Market this summer, NAMA has been hosting a popular event called Seafood Throwdown. Lisa van Sant, a Cape Ann caterer, throws together a meal with ingredients she purchased at the market. Gloucester Daily Times