Cru Dining Awarded Best Chef of Harford County Award at 2026 Farm Fair Chef's Challenge

BEL AIR, MD, UNITED STATES, September 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Cru Dining, led by Chefs Tom Viola and Cory Waddell, took home first place in the 2026 Harford County Farm Fair Chef's Challenge, earning top honors in a live culinary competition that showcased local ingredients, creativity and some of Harford County's most talented chefs.


Cru Dining Team

The Chef's Challenge was held July 20 during the 2026 Harford County Farm Fair. Cru Dining competed against Lemons and Herbs, LLC, the Guarino Family and The Local in a fast-paced competition requiring chefs to create an hors d'oeuvre, entrée and dessert using ingredients provided at the event.

Competitors were supplied with locally sourced proteins, vegetables, fruits, dairy products, herbs, beer, wine and spirits and challenged to transform the ingredients into original dishes within strict time limits. Each creation was presented to a panel of seven judges and evaluated as part of a cumulative point-based competition.

The Cru Dining duo ultimately earned the highest cumulative score and were named the 2026 Chef's Challenge champions.
"Winning the competition was an incredible honor, especially because it gave us an opportunity to showcase what we love about cooking — taking great ingredients and creating a memorable experience around them," said Viola.

The competition reflects many of the same elements at the heart of Cru Dining's private chef experiences: creativity, quality ingredients and thoughtful presentation. Cru Dining creates customized, chef-prepared dining experiences for private gatherings and special occasions throughout Maryland, bringing the experience of an elevated restaurant meal directly to clients

and their guests.

The first-place finish included a $330 cash prize and a custom-inscribed plaque. Rather than keeping the $330 first-place cash prize, Cru Dining donated the winnings to the Humane Society of Harford County, extending the celebration beyond the kitchen and giving back to a local organization serving the community.



About Cru Dining
Cru Dining creates elevated private chef dining experiences designed around each client and occasion. From intimate dinners and celebrations to rehearsal dinners, brunches and other special gatherings, Chefs Tom Viola and Cory Waddell bring customized menus, professional preparation and restaurant-quality dining into private settings.

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>
> *Chef Tom Viola*

Tom Viola
Cru Dining
+1 410-929-6295
email us here



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