

for Robata.

"We'd like more foliage on the patio and perhaps a waterfall on the rocks," he says. "And booths outside—people like booths—they make it cozy and private."

Robata Grill and Sake Bar, 3658 The Barnyard, Carmel, 831/624-2643.

Carmel Tomatofest Marks its 16th Year

Since 1991, local tomato enthusiast Gary Ibsen has organized the Carmel TomatoFest, a celebration of heirloom tomatoes. This year it may have a new name—it's now called the NatureSweet Carmel TomatoFest—but it's still held on the grounds of beautiful Quail Lodge Resort, and still offers innovative and delectable tomato dishes prepared by top local chefs.

The TomatoFest offers many tasty things to sample: there's a "Salsa Showcase," including more than 100 salsas; an "International Olive Oil" tasting; a "Grand Tasting" of more than 350 varieties of heirloom tomatoes from around the world; plus more than 100 premium wines. If that weren't enough, there's also barbecue, tomato-related specialty foods, live music and dancing, and sales of rare, fresh heir-

loom tomatoes and their seeds.

This is the first year that NatureSweet tomatoes provides the title sponsorship of the event, while *Sunset* magazine continues to be the primary sponsor and will host the Sunset Pavilion for culinary and gardening displays during the festival.

The TomatoFest's net proceeds benefit youth charities. Over the years more than \$210,000 has been donated to local, regional and national charities to benefit children. Charities include The American Culinary Federation's Chef and Child Foundation, The Carmel Valley Community Youth Center, The Sunset TomatoFest Scholarship fund, the American Institute of Wine and Food's "Days of Taste," and the Monterey County Farm to School Partnership.

Another valuable outreach of the TomatoFest is the "Tomato Seeds for Those in Need" program, which donates heirloom tomato seeds to urban garden projects, school gardens, and organizations that promote organic gardening and education.

The TomatoFest is held at Quail Lodge on September 16 from 12:30 to 4:30pm. Tickets historically sell out fast, so if you want to attend, get yours early. Call 831/625-6041 or 800/965-4827 or visit www.tomatofest.com.



Dagma Lacey and Gary Ibsen celebrate their passion for heirloom tomatoes at the 16th annual Carmel TomatoFest held at Quail Lodge in Carmel Valley on September 16 from 12:30 to 4:30pm.