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## **CHEF AARON RAIL OF COURTENAY'S WHITE WHALE TAKES HOME TWO PRIZES AT VANCOUVER AQUARIUM'S OCEAN WISE® CHOWDER CHOWDOWN**

**Vancouver, BC** – Things got heated at the Vancouver Aquarium last night, as top chefs from 14 Ocean Wise partner restaurants put their best ladle forward at the annual Chowder Chowdown. This annual event, which takes place during Ocean Wise Month, brings together some of the region's culinary heavyweights as they vie to have their chowder recipe be crowned the winner.

This year, a judging panel of food-savvy media and esteemed chefs selected Chef Aaron Rail of Courtenay, B.C.'s White Whale as the 2016 Ocean Wise Chowder Chowdown Champion. The judging panel was wowed by the chef team's Ultimate Chowder. Featuring a mélange of Ocean Wise seafood including lingcod, trap-caught Dungeness crab, spot prawns and hand-harvested clams, and enhanced with bacon, sweet corn and a hint of parsley, the chowder had the crowd buzzing and mouths watering. White Whale also took home the People's Choice Award, selected by hundreds of chowder lovers who cast their vote. It was deliciously paired with Hoyne Brewing Company's Appleton Extra Special Bitter.

There were a number of other crisp, refreshing beer options from some of the province's top breweries. Parkside Brewery's Seasons Rye Saison and The Wooden Boat's Salmon & Tamarind Chowder à la Mekong (Canh Chua Ca Chowder) from Chef Thompson Tran took home the award for Best Pairing. Thirsty guests could also take their pick from other delicious beverages including bright white wine from Whitehaven Winery and the perfect, sustainable caesar from Ocean Wise partner Walter Caesar.

"This event brings together the very best in B.C.'s food scene, including consumers and chef partners, united by their love and support of sustainable seafood," said Ann-Marie Copping, Vancouver Aquarium's Ocean Wise program manager. "The food is delicious, the energy is amazing and the conversation is inspiring. Everyone that attends is there because they recognize our oceans, threatened by overfishing, need us. Events like this and partners like ours are truly helping to make a difference."

Vancouver Aquarium's Ocean Wise Chowder Chowdown showcased 14 top Ocean Wise chefs in total, who all joined the sustainable seafood movement by bringing the heat to this friendly competition. Chowders featured an impressive array of seafood, from geoduck to sablefish. A list of participating chefs and beverage partners can be found [here](#).

This year's panel of distinguished judges was:

- Rob Clark, The Fish Counter
- Sid Cross, Honourary President, International Wine & Food Society
- Guy Dean, Chief Sustainability Office, Albion Fisheries
- Mijune Pak, Follow Me Foodie
- Olivia Jones, Afternoon Host, QMFM

Ocean Wise began as a grassroots movement in Vancouver in 2005 and is now Canada's most recognizable sustainable seafood program. What began as an initiative involving 16 chefs has expanded to include more than 675 partners with locations from Victoria to St. John's. In addition to Chowder Chowdown in Vancouver, Ocean Wise Month is being celebrated with similar events in Toronto, Calgary and Wolfville and partners across Canada are sharing their stories about sustainability using the hashtag #OceanWise Month.

This year's Ocean Wise Chowder Chowdown in Vancouver was made possible with the support of Albion Fisheries and Transtar Sanitation Supply Ltd.

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**Editor's Note:** Photos from Chowder Chowdown are available on request.

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