

# ARIZONA DAILY SUN NEIGHBORS

SUNDAY  
May 15, 2005  
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## Sixth annual sauce cook-off celebrates 'Italian' way

By DAILY SUN STAFF

This year, a record 17 pasta sauces were entered into the sixth annual Pasta Sauce Cook-off Saturday, May 7, at Pesto Brothers Piazza in Heritage Square. This increasingly popular event is hosted by the Flagstaff Italian-American Club.

Contestants were vying for a \$75 grand prize and bragging rights on northern Arizona's best pasta sauce. Pasta sauce winners included Donald Gala, first place; Laura Barron, second place; and Chris Donnelly, third place.

Festivities were emceed by local personality Mitch Strohmman.

About 250 people came to the event over a four-hour period. Adults paid \$8 to join in the fun, and \$4 for children 12 and under.

A portion of the proceeds will benefit Northland Hospice & Palliative Care, with additional funds applied toward a college scholarship fund.

"All the people I talked to said they really enjoyed it," said Leo Conoscente, president of the Flagstaff Italian-American Club. "There were several people who had come for the first time, and they really enjoyed themselves. They thought the place had some

character. Part of the luncheon was mini-cannoli, which people really liked."

In addition to all the great sauce entries, the Pasta Sauce Cook-off featured entertainment and prizes. Soluna and Jay Chacon provided live music throughout the event and helped create an Italian ambiance.

Also new this year was a display of Lamborghini and Ferrari cars, courtesy of Phoenix car clubs — a real thrill for all the vehicle lovers in town.

A silent auction included donations from local merchant such as a La-Z-Boy recliner chair, a basketball hoop and tickets from Grand Canyon Railroad.

More than 30 prizes were raffled away, as well. The grand prize of round-trip tickets for two from Phoenix to Rome, Italy, was won by Heather Rodgers.

Silent auction and raffle items, donated from local merchants for this event, were valued at more than \$2,000.

The event ended with a visit from Congressman Rick Renzi. Renzi was presented with an honorary membership to the Flagstaff Italian-American Club.

The club meets every first Wednesday of each month at 6



p.m. at Pesto Brothers Piazza. The club participates in activities that promote the knowledge and awareness of both Italian and Italian-American cultures — nearly always including lots of food and fun.

Visit the club Web site ([www.flagstaffitalianclub.com](http://www.flagstaffitalianclub.com)) for information on upcoming meeting presentations and discussions.

For more information, call Leo Conoscente at 213-0428.



### LOCAL CELEBRITY JUDGES

had to choose the best of a record-breaking 17 pasta sauce entries. At left is a look at how they arrived at their decision. Below, Flagstaff Italian-American Club President Leo Conoscente congratulates Donald Gala for his award-winning pasta sauce.

Courtesy photos