

April 6, 2011

## Eat, Drink, and Be Charitable at the 16th Annual United Way Miami Wine & Food Festival, April 14-17

By [Arielle Castillo](#), Wed., Apr. 6 2011 @ 10:25AM

Categories: [News](#)

Sure, the [South Beach Wine & Food Festival](#) gets all the foodie shine in February. And certainly, that festival is unparalleled in its opportunities for hobnobbing while overindulging. But when it ends, it leaves a dry husk of South Beach in its wake, with some extra clean-up duty and unwanted weight creep as its major lasting legacy.

That's all well and good for this party town. But another, longer-running homegrown wine and food festival finds some meaning in the consumption. The annual [United Way Miami Wine and Food Festival](#) raises funds, as the name indicates, for the nonprofit through caloric revelry.



A bird's-eye view of the Taste & Toast event at last year's festival

This year marks the festival's 16th, with a master sponsorship by American Express. And though it stretches across four days, from Thursday, April 14 to Sunday, April 17, there is only one event per day. Considering tickets count as a tax write-off, attending the whole thing may be conceivable for the party hearty and charitable. Here's the run-down on the events:

### **5 p.m. Thursday, April 14: Taste & Toast, at the Village of Merrick Park**

Think of a scaled down, locally focused, younger-oriented version of SBWFF's Best of the Best. This event, held at the Village of Merrick Park, is where you can sample international wines, and catered food from more than 30 South Florida restaurants, including Meat Market, Ortanique on the Mile, Timo, Two Chefs, and many more.

Plus, from 9 p.m. on comes a special Glenfiddich-lubricated afterparty called "Music to Drink Whiskey By," which sounds like a great idea indeed. Tickets are \$150 for VIP admission, which scores you an hour of tasting free of the general riff-raff, \$75 for general admission, \$65 for United Way Young Leaders, and \$20 for just the whiskey party, a deal indeed.

### **6:30 p.m. Friday, April 15: Food, Friends, and Fun**

At \$300 a ticket or \$2,400 for a table of eight, this is one of two events that comes closest to a black-tie gala. As such, it comes with all the usual charity dinner trappings like a silent auction and a cocktail reception, this time sponsored by Bacardi. Where it differs from the usual seated affair though, is that it eschews rubber chicken in favor of an interactive experience with Dewey LoSasso. Ostensibly, guests will be put into teams and then cook their own meal under his supervision, while Bacardi mixologist Gary Hayward will guide them as they shake their own

cocktails.

**6:30 p.m. Saturday, April 16: Cellar-bration**

Like the Friday-night event, this is another seated affair, with tickets costing the same (\$300 a person, or this time \$3000 for a table of 10). This one is more wine-focused, with bottles selected from the festival's Best in Glass Wine Challenge, held last year. Food itself comes from River Oyster Bar, Sakay Kitchen, the InterContinental Miami, Solea, and even Miami-Dade College's newly opened Miami Culinary Institute.

**1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, April 17: Brews and Bites**

For the closing party, things get more casual and affordable again with Brews and Bites, held throughout Mary Brickell Village. This is for the craft beer geeks, who, with their admission, get a souvenir tasting cup as well as "beer-friendly food from South Florida's favorite establishments" -- although no word yet, specifically, on what that means. Live music comes from local favorites the Spam Allstars. Tickets cost \$75 for VIP admission, which, again, gets you an hour's early admission; otherwise it's \$55 for general admission and \$45 for United Way Young Leaders. If you use your AmEx to book online, you also get 15 percent off.

*To buy tickets, and for for the full admission and schedule rundown, visit [miamiwinefestival.org](http://miamiwinefestival.org) or call 305-646-7111.*

*Follow [Short Order](#) on Facebook and Twitter [@Short\\_Order](#).*