

By B.W. COOK MAR 19, 2019 | 6:00 AM



Lauri Burns, left, the founder and executive director of The Teen Project, with Kristin Martin, Table for 10 founder and director, at a recent fundraiser. (Photos by Tony Lattimore and Bob Hodson)

Table For 10, one of Orange County's most talked about dining extravaganzas for a cause, recently made its 13th annual social splash, attracting some 370 gourmands who sampled creative cuisine from the region's outstanding chefs.

Laguna Cliffs Marriott Resort & Spa in Dana Point was the recent Sunday night destination, with the massive dinner party overseen by Executive Chef **Salvatore Giuliani**, who was joined by **John Tesar** of "Top Chef" fame.

The dynamic duo became a trio with the addition and talent of star OC chef **Pascal Olhats**, who welcomed 30 comrades from several kitchens, including Coliseum Pool & Grill at The Resort at Pelican Hill, Harley Laguna Beach, Prego Ristorante, the Montage Hotel and Resort in Laguna Beach, The Ranch at Laguna Beach, True Food Kitchen in Newport Beach and The Pacific Club in Newport Beach — to name a few. Chef **Manfred Lassahn** of the **Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach Resort & Spa** served as honorary executive chef and chair of the evening.

A "table for 10" was set up for the donors. The creative teams served a table-side, six-course dining experience with premium wine pairings at the unique and spectacularly decorated tables. The evening is both a feast for the palate and for the other senses, as the table designs feature amazing florals, artistic china and stemware settings, unusual linens, candelabras and carefully selected seating — all brought in for the evening.

The outstanding chefs deserve kudos, for this complex outing is costly and time-consuming. And it is a labor of love for the charity, **the Teen Project**. Founder and director **Lauri Burns** was front and center, extolling praise on the contributing chefs, as well as on the generous crowd, ultimately bringing in some \$340,000 for the charity, which is dedicated to rescuing young girls from homelessness, child abuse and drug addiction. There is also a special program for women who have been victims of sex trafficking.

Since 2007 Burns has dedicated her life to this mission. Sharing a remarkable story with the dinner crowd, Burns recounted the passion of a long-time advocate of her cause. "Rather than waiting to donate \$1 million to The Teen Project following his passing, [he] wrote a check," said Burns.

The donation enabled Burns to obtain the **former Boys Town property in Silverado Canyon** and create a sanctuary for young women. Currently, there are 30 residents under the care of the Teen Project, which was made possible by the generosity of developer **Greg Stone**, who made the charity the recipient of the 15-acre Boys Town site. It is now named Vera's Sanctuary in honor of the man who wrote that early \$1 million check.



Celebrity chef Pascal Olhats and honorary Executive Chef Chair Manfred Lassahn of the Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach Resort hold their honors at the Teen Project benefit. (Photos by Tony Lattimore and Bob Hodson)

Making the dinner fundraiser more special were words from two young women who have graduated from The Teen Project, **Janelle Hinshaw** and **Shaine Heyboer**. The crowd offered a standing ovation in support of their life-transformation.

Other special guests and significant donors honored were **Mona Lee Nesseth**, **Sue Peters**, **Mary Murfey**, **Shelley Komarov**, **Pat** and **Bill Podlich**, and **Bill Parsons**. The title sponsor of the evening was **Mike Danzi**, chairman and CEO of Legacy Pharmaceuticals International, who was joined by major underwriters **Steve** and **Sheral Burke**, **Paul** and **Amy Blavin**, and corporate sponsors **Pacifica Hotels** and the Callahan & Blaine Law Firm. The talented **Kristin Martin** of KM Productions produced the special evening on the coast.

As the evening came to a crescendo, each participating chef was asked to stand and accept applause, not only from their individual table but from the entire ballroom.

The talented culinary donors were: **Charly Houegban**, **Phillip Tangonan**, **Diego Bernal**, **Jean Pierre-Dubray**, **Blake Mellgren**, **Ryan Wagner**, **Matt Roman**, **Jessica Roy**, **Sean Gebo**, **Greg Daniels**, **Landon Pulizzi**, **Sara Guccione**, **Christian Estrada** and **Cody Storts**.

Also recognized were **Keith Prante**, **Paolo Buffa**, **Paul Carcano**, **Zach Geerson**, **Michael Doctulero**, **Andy Arndt**, **Lindsay Smith-Rosales**, **Adam Navidi**, **Eric Mickle**, **Ugo Allesina**, **Ron Fougeray**, **Stephen King**, **Joosung Lee**, **Mike Webb**, **Kyle St. John** and **Noe Moreno**.