

Dish Omaha – June 25, 2025

Jeff: Time now for Dish Omaha featuring KVNO's resident foodie just back from Aspen, Colorado. You're back from the festival.

Diane: I'm back from the festival, Jeff. It was unbelievable. The Food and Wine Classic in Aspen has been going on for 42 years.

Jeff: Wow.

Diane: Started in 1983 as a local wine festival to promote tourism in the off-ski season in Aspen. In 1986, Food and Wine magazine took it over, and then it just exploded. I don't know if you've ever seen pictures in the magazine or some of the advertisements. It's really kind of the premier food festival in the United States. It attracts over 4,000 attendees from all over, and that includes 500 volunteers.

Jeff: Wow. Was this your first time?

Diane: My first time, and it was overwhelming. You know, it's kind of like when you go to a foreign country the first time. Your first day, you're like, I don't even know where anything is.

Jeff: Dear in the headlights kind of thing.

Diane: Yeah, and then by the second day, you're like, okay, maybe I got this.

Jeff: Speaking of days, what were your days like at the festival? How many days were you there?

Diane: I got there Thursday real early, and I got home last Sunday really late. It was a full, full day. The days were so organized. There are 10 event spaces downtown for these seminars. There were over 70 seminars over the three days.

Jeff: Wow.

Diane: Some were wine-focused. Some were food-focused. Some were demos where people ate. You know, the audience got to eat what was happening. Some were panel discussions, fireside chats, that kind of thing. So, there would be a seminar in the morning at 10 o'clock, and then the Grand Tasting Pavilion would open for two hours. It has a beautiful-

Jeff: I just want to hang out there.

Diane: I know. It was so inviting, and I'm not even going to tell you. I know how bad the weather was last weekend in Omaha. It was like 70 degrees in Aspen. So, then you'd have a two-hour tasting from like 11:30 to 1:30, and there were over 150 vendors in these three giant tents making a huge horseshoe and then a big grassy courtyard with, you know, gelato and water. Oh. It was incredible. Then you would break for lunch, if you can believe that. I was invited to a lunch after that. I'm like, I'm not really in the mood for lunch. And then another seminar at 3 o'clock, and then tasting would open again, and it would all be over.

Jeff: That's just one day.

Diane: That's just one day.

Jeff: So out of all of the sessions, any notable sessions jump out to you?

Diane: You know, I thought of you because there was the perfect pairing, potato chips and wine.

Jeff: (laughter) Kind of an Italian thing, right?

Diane: And it was pretty spectacular. And the guy makes chips out of wine.

Jeff: What?

Diane: Like wine lease, I think. I don't know.

Jeff: I don't see any chips. You brought some, though. They're in your bag. They're in your car.

Diane: Yes, my luggage was lost. Then one of the wine guys did one called "Go Big Superstar Magnums", and it was about, you know, the magnum bottles and the nebuchadnezzars and the giant bottles. He had a bottle that required a guy to come in with a special drill to open.

Jeff: Wow.

Diane: It was incredible just the stories of these bottles.

Jeff: And any... you're overwhelming with all the thinking about all the food, but any top dishes that jump out?

Diane: Yeah, I can think of a few. If anybody's a top chef fan out there, Shwe, who was one of the finalists this year, I got to meet him. He made a pan puri. Pan puri, I think it's called. It was pickled shrimp, cilantro, and cilantro chutney with salsa matcha. It was in a little crispy bowl, and it's exactly what he made for the finale, which was pretty special. I had beef wagyu tartare served on a chip made from steak.

Jeff: Sounds just terrible. (laughter)

Diane: It was one of the most flavorful things I have ever experienced. And then how about a wasabi egg salad on an herb toast with salmon roe? I mean, it was top shelf stuff. Jeff, I got to tell you, I had caviar and champagne every day.

Jeff: And so, you're kind of giving me a sense of what the overall vibe, I'm guessing it was overall cheerful and happy.

Diane: It was people celebrating.

Jeff: How do you go and not be happy?

Diane: Well, exactly. You know, I was there to talk to people about their passion and what they do. So next week when we talk again, we will go a little bit into how I interacted with some of the folks I met and a couple of the famous faces that talked to me.

Jeff: There's some famous faces?

Diane: Yeah.

Jeff: All right. Well, Diane Watson, thanks so very much, and thanks for coming back from the festival and sharing the news. And we'll look forward to hearing more from you next time.

Diane: See you next week.

Jeff: All right. Thanks so much.

Diane: Thank you.