



Press Release

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Mississippi Chef Wins Cali Cheese Competition

Photo: [click here](#)

Gulfport, Miss. – (Aug. 31, 2023) There's literally a "big cheese" at one of Island View Casino Resorts' restaurants. Prime Cut room chef, Mary Grace Moss, won the "Real California Cheese and Mac Challenge", taking home \$5,000 in winnings for her grand prize award-winning Elote Corn-a-Roni.

The California Milk Advisory Board's inaugural virtual foodservice contest challenged professional chefs and culinary students to develop and create Cheese & Mac dishes using Real California dairy products. Chef Moss built her dish to include Elote, fire-roasted Mexican street corn, crispy bacon, Real California Queso Fresco and Cotija cheeses and Crema Mexicana. It was garnished with crushed corn chips, freshly chopped cilantro, sliced green onions, and a hint of fresh lime, yielding a full fiesta of flavors.

Chef Mary Moss is southern raised from Oxford, Mississippi. She was introduced to corn-a-roni on road trip to see Ole Miss, her college alma-mater, play in the College World Series in Omaha, Nebraska. "I remember the food in Omaha being so good and it was nice to know they tailgate too," explained Moss. "Wandering around I noticed a tent that had a huge crowd. I was hoping for the best. I was handed a paper plate with something they called corn-a-roni, I was blown away by how satisfying it was."

"Jackie Seavey, the executive sous chef at Island View Casino Resort told me about the Cheese & Mac competition and that dish was the first thing that came to mind," said Chef Moss. She and I got our creative minds reeling, she suggested roasting the corn, like an Elote. Chef Jackie proceeded to say it needed a mac and cheese topper, but you will need something a little bit crunchier, maybe a tortilla? Then at the same time we both said Fritos!"

"I immediately started shopping at all the super mercados along the coast looking for California cheese. It was easy because California is the biggest purveyors of Hispanic cheeses. I went home, took out my grandmother's casserole dish and my favorite saucepan, started frying the bacon, roasted the corn, and the rest is history!"

For the award winning recipe: [click here](#)

Chef Mary Grace Moss graduated from the University of Mississippi in 2007 with a degree in hospitality management. Her first restaurant was Doe's Eat Place in Oxford. She moved to Biloxi post-Katrina to participate in the M.A.P. program hosted by Beau Rivage. Chef Moss trained for six months in each outlet there, mainly focusing on steaks. She was then promoted to sous chef of the night club Coast and the deli. In 2009, Moss left Biloxi to help open a steakhouse in McComb, Miss. In 2015 she returned to the coast and worked at a couple of local restaurants before getting a call from David Crabtree, executive chef at Island View. Chef Moss started as a production cook in Carter Green Steakhouse, and after three years was promoted to sous chef. She is now room chef in Prime Cut. Chef Moss has been with Island View for almost 9 years. She has also competed with other chefs from Island View in local and national competitions. When she's not working, she enjoys the challenge of food competitions, traveling, trying new restaurants and grilling out with her neighbors. She enjoys the comradery that food brings when people get together.

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Island View Casino Resort opened on Sept. 18, 2006, as the only casino in Gulfport, Miss. On June 21, 2018, Island View opened the fourth phase of expansion with Beach View Casino, a \$75 million smoke-free casino. The land-based casinos, located on 40 acres of waterfront property, currently offer 126,000 square-feet of casino gaming with approximately 2,700 slots and 49 table games. This fourth phase of expansion gives Island View 1,000,000 square-feet of beachfront gaming, hotel and entertainment space. The resort also features 970 hotel rooms and suites, with 565 in the north casino tower and 405 in the beach tower, which opened on April 29, 2016, as part of Island View's \$58 million 2015 expansion. Restaurant and lounge offerings include Carter Green Steakhouse, Prime Cut, Beach Blvd Steamer, C&G Grille, The Buffet, The Diner, Dockside Deli, The Coffee Shop and Beach Coffee Shop, Beignet Café, The Sweet Stop, Coast Candymakers, Gulf Breeze Daiquiri, Sunset Bar & Deck, Beach View Casino Stage, and casino bars. The resort is the only local casino to offer direct beach access. Other amenities include two tropical-themed pools with cabanas; Blue Shell Spa, a full-service day spa; two retail outlets; the View Showroom, a 600-seat entertainment venue; and Windance Country Club, an award-winning golf course, also located in Gulfport. Island View Casino Resort is privately held by Rick Carter and Terry Green, two Gulfport natives and longtime casino executives committed to the post-Hurricane Katrina rebuilding efforts of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. For more information: 228-314-2100 or IslandViewCasino.com