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TEN MOLE CHEFS TO COMPETE AT ANNUAL MOLE & MARIACHI FESTIVAL

Four Mariachi Bands, Two Local Dance Groups and 'Mojigangas' to Perform at Benefit for Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park

AUG. 31, 2016—SANTA CRUZ, CA—Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends), a non-profit organization dedicated to sustaining the legacy of our local state parks and beaches, today announced its Mole & Mariachi Festival has a full lineup of mole chefs competing in the sauce cook-off at the fourth annual festival, held 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, September 10 at Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park (144 School St.) in downtown Santa Cruz. Admission to event is free; mole tasting kits will cost \$10.

A benefit for Friends in support of Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park restoration projects, including repairing adobe walls, as well educational programs, the event will feature a mole tasting and competition. Local chefs will prepare mole (a traditional Mexican sauce, sometimes made using chocolate). Mole sauces will be judged by event attendees and by a panel of local celebrity judges.

Competing chefs include restaurants El Chipotle, El Jardin, Chocolate and El Chino; caterers and food makers Cesario Ruiz of My Mom's Mole, Taquitos Gabriel's and Sunny's Catering; and home chefs from Club Tuxpan Santa Cruz, Emma Pinto (Mama Marquita's) and Lidia Montesino (Jolí Molé). Tasting kits include six tastes for \$10; additional tasting tickets can be purchased for \$2 each.

Festival attendees can vote for their favorite mole in the coveted "People's Choice" award category. A panel of 10 judges also will rate the sauce to name the "Judges' Choice" winner. Judges for 2016 include state Secretary of Natural Resources John Laird; Assemblymember Mark Stone; Patricia Santana, owner of Manuel's Mexican Restaurant; Augustine Ceballos, facilities manager for the Pajaro Coast Sector of California State Parks; Santa Cruz City Councilmember David Terrazas; Hilltromper Editor Traci Hukill; Edible Monterey Bay writer Debbie Lührman; Tony Solis of the Santa Cruz Sentinel; Good Times Publisher Jeanne Howard; and Santa Cruz Life writer Christine Candelaria.

Other festival highlights include the availability of Mole dishes from food vendors for festival attendees to enjoy: El Chipotle will offer mole Oaxaqueño plates; Taqueria Lidia mole sopés, mole empanadas and mole huaraches; and Taquitos Gabriel's will sell mole tamales. Additional food options include Mission Hill Creamery, , Garcia's Fish Tacos and Sason Mexicano, as well as churros, fruit cups and roasted corn. Fresh-fruit aguas frescas made by Mollie's Country Café will be for sale, as well beer from Discretion Brewing, wine by Santa Cruz Mountain Vineyard and chavelas, a drink made with beer, tomato juice and spices, for purchase.

For the first time ever, Mariachi Feminil Orgullo Mexicano — an all-female mariachi band — will perform at the festival. Other performers include live mariachi music from Mariachi Alma de Mexico

and the group's youth bands, Mariachi Juvenil Alma de Mexico and Mariachi Infantil Alma de Mexico, and dancing by local dance troupes Senderos and Estrellas de Esperanza. *Mojigangas* — the giant, dancing puppets, also will return.

A diverse array of artisans will show and sell work at the Mole & Mariachi Festival Mercado, including Artemex's display of blouses, dresses, drinkware, dolls, jewelry and other handmade items from Mexico. Watsonville upstart food maker The Green Waffle will sell prepackaged, healthy, locally made waffles. Artesanias Mexicanos, Creative Woman and Alejandro's Trade also will have items for sale.

Free activities for children will take place throughout the festival including piñatas every hour and face painting.

A raffle will feature 10 prizes including an all-inclusive trip to Mexico, a wine collection valued at \$800 and a stay in an Airstream trailer at the KOA campground across from Manresa State Beach.

Launched in 2013, the fourth edition of the Mole & Mariachi Festival will be solar powered, thanks to the generous support of Sandbar Solar. The festival also will strive to be a zero-waste event. The zero-waste effort is sponsored by the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County and will be implemented by The Offset Project. Attendees can make green choices when traveling to the festival, by taking advantage of the free bike valet or riding the free trolley from downtown Santa Cruz.

Event sponsors include:

Platinum level: Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County, Discretion Brewing, Good Times Newsweekly, Mariachi Alma de Mexico, Santa Cruz Mountain Vineyard

Gold level: Bonny Hawley, Cabovillas.com, Defib This Emergency Response Training, DNA Entertainment, Jen & Delphina Sanchez, KAZU-FM, KSCO-AM, KPIG-FM, Leonard Building/Ed Newman, Lighthouse Bank, Miller Maxfield, Inc., Mission Printers, Sandbar Solar, Santa Cruz Community Health Centers, Santa Cruz Life, Georgann and John Scally, Sunny's Catering, Taco Works

Silver level: Alexis Party Rental, D'La Colmena Market & Catering, Peg and Paul Danielson

For more information about how to get involved in the Mole & Mariachi Festival, as a sponsor or volunteer, email Festival@ThatsMyPark.org or visit www.thatsmypark.org/events/mole-and-mariachi. For more about mole, visit [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_\(sauce\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce))

About Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park

Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park commemorates its 25th year in 2016. It is home to the oldest building in Santa Cruz County. Built between 1822 and 1824 by local Ohlonean and Yokuts Indians, the park's signature adobe is the only remaining structure from Mission Santa Cruz, founded in 1791. One of just four adobe buildings left in Santa Cruz County — and sometimes confused with the nearby replica mission chapel — it is the only building of its kind preserved as a museum in the State of California. The adobe served as housing for Neophyte families who lived and worked at the Mission, which operated until 1834 when it was secularized. After decades of private ownership, the adobe was sold to the State of California, extensively restored and finally opened in 1991 to the public as the Santa Cruz Mission SHP.

Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks rallied the community to save Santa Cruz Mission SHP from closure in 2012. Friends funds interpretation services and a portion of park operations, and also runs the

Mission ParkStore. In addition, Friends has implemented key improvements at the park, including a remodel of the patio, the opening of new interpretive exhibits, renovated outdoor cooking facilities and new hours of operation to serve local school children (approximately 2,500 third and fourth graders visit the park annually). Friends also established the Mole & Mariachi Festival, a bicultural celebration each September. The park is supported by the Mission Committee, members of which include representatives of Friends, State Parks and dedicated community volunteers.

About Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks

Celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2016, Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks is an entrepreneurial nonprofit sustaining the legacy of our state parks and beaches. Through an innovative partnership with California State Parks, and by leveraging local community support, Friends provides funding for educational programs, visitor services and capital projects. Friends is passionately dedicated to the preservation of our spectacular natural environment and rich cultural history. Friends also operates six ParkStores, offering nature- and history-themed merchandise for sale to benefit local parks and beaches. ParkStore locations include Natural Bridges, New Brighton, Santa Cruz Mission, Seacliff, Wilder Ranch and Online. Learn more at ThatsMyPark.org or via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest.

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