



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **WILD PEAR RESTAURANT & TRAVEL SALEM TO REPRESENT WILLAMETTE VALLEY AT FEAST PORTLAND**

*World-class culinary event – September 20-23, 2012*

**SALEM, Ore.** – Oregon’s world-class celebration of food and drink called “Feast Portland” will take place September 20-23, 2012 downtown Portland. Feast will be held in Pioneer Courthouse Square and hold events like the Sandwich Invitational, an Asian-inspired night market, high profile chef demonstrations, conversations with food thought leaders and a whole lot of eating and drinking.

While Portland will be the center of this festival Salem has been offered the opportunity to shine and represent the Willamette Valley at the Travel Oregon ~Oregon Bounty Grand Tasting Tent – Saturday, September 22 from 3:00-4:00pm. Celebrated Salem chef Jeff James, representing the Wild Pear Restaurant, will be highlighting a sample dish using the freshest ingredients from local family farm E.Z. Orchards. Chef James along with, sisters and co-owners of the Wild Pear Restaurant, Cecelia and Jessica Ritter will be on hand to talk to event goers and promote the agricultural bounty of the Willamette Valley and the Wild Pear. Kevin Zielinski with E.Z. Orchards will be serving tastes of their hard cidre and sharing information about their traditional French method of fermentation. Travel Salem representatives will be in attendance promoting Salem’s culinary scene as well as the amenities of the mid-Willamette Valley.

“Oregon is a true cornucopia and the Willamette Valley is the corner stone of Oregon’s bountiful harvests,” said Irene Bernards, Marketing & PR Director for Travel Salem. “Marion County is Oregon’s number one agricultural producing county and we have the opportunity to showcase the delicious offerings of the region and how local chefs partner with farmers and unify agricultural assets into culinary delights,” said Bernards.

Travel Salem approached the Wild Pear Restaurant about representing the Willamette Valley due to their commitment to local, seasonal and organic ingredients and how they use these ingredients in familiar and unexpected ways, whenever possible.

“We are honored to be representing the Willamette Valley at the Oregon Bounty Grand Tasting Tent, “ said Cecilia and Jessica, Wild Pear Co-Owners. “We are extremely fortunate to have Chef, Jeff James represent The Wild Pear and our Mid-Willamette Valley region. Chef James has been a guest chef at the James Beard House in New York and also selected for L’Ecole des Chefs in Lyon, France and the Oregon Bounty tour for the United States Dept of Agriculture in Japan. Chef James’ culinary culture and talents has paired well with our company where he has spent the last two years. With a diverse ethnic background of European and Asian descent, we embrace the flavors and styles of many cultures. Our food is best described as New American, which reflects the bold, bright and fresh flavors of our region and the world. We work with local farmers and purveyors to use product that is locally sourced, seasonal, and organic as much as possible.”

For more information regarding Feast Portland visit [www.FeastPortland.com](http://www.FeastPortland.com).

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**\*\*\*Wild Pear Restaurant - Cecilia and Jessica Ritter** have a knack for taking neglected properties and giving them new life. Their first project in 2000 was the circa 1900 Roberts General Store on River Road South and more recently, since 2004, the circa 1880 Adolph Block Building on State Street in Downtown Salem. Both locations are a reflection of their enthusiasm and passion for what they do. But saving old buildings is just a byproduct of their real business...food & entertaining.

The sisters' first entrepreneurial venture into the food industry began back in 2000 when they conceived of and opened **Wild Pear Catering and Fine Foods** in the old Roberts country store. After a couple of years cultivating a loyal lunch and catering clientele, the two young women were barraged with requests to provide a more full-service venue. And so, dinner service and Karl's Place, their wine bar, was introduced in June of 2003. The demand for the sister's food was so great that they decided to broaden their scope and in June 2004, opened **Wild Pear Restaurant & Catering** at 372 State Street in downtown Salem, Oregon, where they continue to remain the original "wild pair."

The Ritters make a dynamic business team. Cecilia's career has largely been in the service and restaurant management end of the hospitality business, beginning in her late teens with service to beginning management in her early twenties. She continues to use her extensive food, wine and service knowledge in leading her team.

Jessica's background has been in the kitchen and catering service from running kitchens to managing catering companies. She has a culinary degree from Boston University, where she had the privilege of having Julia Child as one of her instructors and culinary mentors. Together, the sisters, create the seasonally inspired menus used throughout their company and together manage the large talented staff. \*\*\*

**\*\*\*Jeff James Bio** - When James' early plans to become a professional drummer or DJ at a radio station fizzled and his only work experience was driving tractor and bailing hay he fell into the restaurant business where he's thrived for almost 30 years. His time as Exec Sous Chef at Salishan Lodge when it was the only 5 star/5 diamond rated resort in Oregon led him to Washington's Methow Valley as Exec Chef of the Freestone Inn then Sun Mountain Lodge. He returned home to the Willamette Valley to open j.james. After selling his eponymous restaurant of 10 years he's teamed with the dynamic duo of the Wild Pear, his wife Cecilia Ritter James and her sister/partner Jessica Ritter at their longtime popular eatery in the heart of the capital city. They've also been caterers to the Governor for the last twelve plus years. (James Beard House guest Chef. Selected for: L'Ecole des Chefs in Lyon, France and the Oregon Bounty tour for the United States Dept of Agriculture in Japan.)\*\*\*

**\*\*\*Travel Salem** is a non-profit organization that promotes the greater Salem area as a premier, year-round destination for conventions, events and leisure travelers. Tourism economic impact for the region is \$500 million annually. Travel Salem manages the award-winning Travel Café, the official Salem area destination visitors center located at the historic Grand Hotel building (181 High St. NE, Salem), two I-5 satellite visitor information locations at the BEST WESTERN PLUS Mill Creek Inn (3125 Ryan Dr. SE) and the Red Lion Hotel (3301 Market St. NE), and a full-service travel planning website [www.TravelSalem.com](http://www.TravelSalem.com).\*\*\*