

The **Grand Chefs Gala** was held on February 3 at Navy Pier to celebrate our fabulous culinary community and to benefit [The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation](#). The night honored legendary restaurateur **Rich Melman** with the *Chicago Classic Award*. During the first course of the evening, guests mingled among tasting tables hosted by some of Chicago's top restaurants/chefs. **Gene & Georgetti**



Grand Ballroom at Navy Pier set for platinum anniversary of Grand Chefs Gala

(last year's Chicago Classic winner) served up roasted eggplant fritters; Chef **Charles Welch** of **Honey's** offered poached shrimp with passion fruit; **Eataly** served fresh, house-made



Michelle Durpetti, honoree Rich Melman, Tony Durpetti and emcee Jeff Mauro

mozzarella and **The Blanchard's** duck tart with winter fruits was a hit with the crowd. Hosted by the **Food Network's Jeff Mauro**, the event included a

live auction conducted by **David Goodman**. Boka Group's **Kevin Boehm** was on hand to help auction off a progressive dinner at several



Chef Ryan McCaskey

of his restaurants that sold for \$3K; a **Hotel Del Coronado** package included a concert on the beach with **Gary Sinise** that sold for \$8500 and a Maine experience with



Fifty-five chefs and mixologists participated in Gala

chef **Ryan McCaskey** sold for \$6K. Melman was introduced by **Tony Durpetti** and his daughter **Michelle**. She said, "Rich has received two James Beard Foundation Awards and a lifetime achievement award before tonight's

honor. He places enormous value on relationships and people and cultivates and maintains them, both in his



Legendary Chicago Classics--The Durpettis and Melmans

brand and outside of it. The contributions that Mr. Melman, his family and his restaurants make to our industry has spanned decades and impacted countless



Unique table decor at Gala

lives. We are thrilled to know that they will continue to share their knowledge, good work and love of food with the world for years to come." **St. Lou's Assembly**, a West Loop cafeteria-style, comfort food restaurant won the People's Choice Award.



Chicago Classic Award winners Tony and Marion Durpetti (Gene & Georgetti)

Chef Carlos Cruz' winning dish was a foie gras soup with candied walnuts and pomegranates. This event, co-chaired by **Eurest's Jim Kallas** and his wife **Rose**, was founded in 1997 by a group of philanthropic-minded friends-- **Wayne Harth, Tom Kehoe, Judi Gorman, Sylvie Margulies, Michael Pagliuco** and **Christine Stevens**. Over \$670,000 was raised to benefit [The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation](#).