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Review / Bermuda Gourmet Getaway

'The crowd's eyes were much bigger than their stomachs'

With a smorgasbord of delicious food up for grabs and more than enough wine to wash it down with, you're onto a winner.

This is no doubt why thousands of people jumped at the chance to snap up tickets for the fifth annual Bermuda Gourmet Getaway. Put food and wine together and Bermudians will come flocking.

Throw in a healthy dose of international and local chefs sharpening their knives and sharing their expertise right under your nose and hey presto, you've definitely got something.

But that was all there was, and was that enough? People were more than happy to spend a couple of hours strolling around the food and wine booths at the Fairmont Southampton Resort on Saturday and Sunday.

And there was no window-shopping going on, these people wanted food and they wanted it now. The crowd's eyes were definitely bigger than their stomachs as they literally pushed past one another to fight their way to the food.

International faces

The weekend's 'Viking Village' had a fair selection of vendors offering their goods and it was great to see so many international faces gracing our shores.

You could attend wine seminars, be a judge in the fish chowder competition, watch the ice sculpting competition and celebrity chef cooking demonstrations and learn about cake decorating. Even the kids were kept occupied by learning how to whip up some healthy recipes at the Kids' Village.

There were a handful of wine buffs there to put you to shame, but the majority of people were there for the same reason; the freebies. So, you would have been hard-pushed to spend more than a few hours there as once you'd eaten enough, the Viking Village had limited appeal.

Yes, it was worthy of visit, yes everyone no doubt picked up a few tips to take back to their kitchens. But I'm not sure it will put Bermuda on the global culinary map.

Top marks for effort though, especially host Rahman "Rock" Harper (winner of last year's Hell's Kitchen TV show) who brought plenty of personality to the event. But it wasn't exactly up there with the BBC Good Food Show.

Squashed in

I'm not sure about the change of venue from the National Sports Centre to the Fairmont Southampton either. Surely an open-air and more airy location adds to the atmosphere. Things felt a little squashed in at the hotel and with activities/demonstration in different rooms people didn't really seem to know where they were going.

The Gourmet Getaway kicked off on Thursday with a new event called Taste Bermuda. This was a nice (although a little chilly) start to the event as folk were able to mingle with the local and international chefs. It gave people a taster of what was to come over the next few days.

But were these really the finest samplings from Bermuda's top restaurants? The majority of

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Sanjay Leeme from the
Ocean Club at the Fairmont
Southampton (formerly the
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Competition. ***

Photo by Tony McWilliam



restaurants seemed to be serving up the same types of food. There wasn't enough diversity for my liking, after all a lamb kebab is still a lamb kebab however much you dress it up!

Overall, I enjoyed this year's Gourmet Getaway, my palate felt satisfied but not that excited. But here's hoping the event will become even bigger and better next year. My stomach is rumbling already.

Intricate design: Sanjay Leem from the Ocean Club at the Fairmont Southampton (former the Whaler Inn) was a winner in Saturday's Vegetable Carving Competition. * Photo by Tony McWilliam