**45th Annual Ocean City Trade Expo**

**Mixing It Up on the Culinary Showcase Stage**

OCEAN CITY, MD - Back by popular demand, winner of MasterChef season 7, Shaun O'Neale will entertain the audience with his charming personality and sharp culinary skills on both days of the 45th Annual Ocean City Hotel & Restaurant Trade Expo. Shaun’s initial obsession was music and he DJ’d lots of famous parties in Vegas, however, one thing has remained constant for him through the crazy years; his absolute obsession with all things food! He has had the honor to cook for and learn from true masters in the culinary world like Gordon Ramsay, Christina Tosi, Wolfgang Puck, Daniel Boulud, Richard Blais, Aaron Sanchez, Edward Lee and Kevin Sbraga which intensified Shaun's passion in the kitchen. Transitioning from DJ to chef was a fairly simple task for Shaun. As a DJ, he mixes music to create a new beat that is all his own and as a chef, he mixes farm ingredients, items from produce vendors and meat suppliers and turns them into something unique. Though he has been traveling around the globe showcasing his talents, Shaun remains humble. He cites perseverance as a way to get things accomplished. His latest passion is following his idea to open a Vegas restaurant. Come meet Shaun O’Neale as he entertains at the Trade Expo on Sunday and Monday at noon. Following his cooking demos, he’ll do meet and greets!

Food Network Chopped Champion Chef David Thomas will appear on Monday, March 4th at 1:30pm on the Culinary Showcase Stage. Chef David is currently the Executive Chef and partner at Ida B's Table, located in Baltimore where he was born and raised. Chef David’s love for food developed at a young age when he watched his grandmother cook for hours.  Fast forward to the 90’s when he and wife Tonya started catering and continued working in industry restaurants.  In 2000, in his pursuit to elevate his skills, he went to work for Master Chef Kevin Zabonick. Under Chef Zabonick, Chef David learned classic techniques and every aspect of the brigade system one station at a time. Soon after his training was completed, he became Executive Chef at the Metropolitan Kitchen/Lounge in Annapolis, Maryland. There he developed his signature style as a chef; Modern Soul Food.

In 2012, Chef David along with his business partner opened Herb & Soul, a farm to table, local and sustainable Café.  The demand for Herb & Soul grew to the point that he opened another location, developed a catering program, and launched a food truck. After Herb & Soul ran its course, David became a consultant and helped open restaurants.  His consulting work led him to a concept that would become Ida B's Table. He was brought on as a partner in order to create something in Baltimore that was for Baltimore. Sticking with the local and sustainable model of modern soul food, Chef David built the restaurant and menu from the ground up focusing on highlighting the history and importance of soul food. Ida B's Table has become nationally recognized in multiple publications including Food and Wine, Gardens & Gun, Eater, and Life & Thyme. Chef David's goal is to reclaim the narrative of soul food on a national platform starting with Baltimore.

Vice President and Director of Culinary for SolDel Concepts, Doug Ruley will take the stage on Monday, March 4 at 2:30pm. Doug was born and raised in Elkton MD. From a very young age he was interested in food and the kitchen, often helping prepare meals for special family occasions. He spent many hours helping his grandparents on their farm, tending to the garden, the livestock, and the smoke house. Doug spent endless summer days shucking corn and picking beans. His early childhood experiences created a strong foundation and an appreciation and love for food preparation at every stage.

In 1996 Doug graduated at the top of his class at Johnson and Whales, Rhode Island. He worked in many prestigious restaurants. Doug helped open and later was promoted to Executive Chef of Iron Hill, which now has over 10 locations. While at Iron Hill, the restaurant was awarded “Best of Delaware: Best Restaurant” for five consecutive years.

After 10 great years with Iron Hill, Doug and his wife decided to move to Coastal Delaware. In 2006 he started working for SoDel Concepts as Chef of Bluecoast Seafood Grill. He took on a strong role in helping the company grow as the opening chef of three SoDel restaurants.

Doug has been the featured chef at the prestigious James Beard House four times, and also was the head chef for the unprecedented event “Breaking Bread Behind Bars” at the 2015 Mid-Atlantic Food and Wine Festival, the most prestigious event of its kind in the region. Lastly he was featured as head chef for the 5th annual “Moments in the Moonlight” Gala to benefit Peninsula Regional Medical Center in Salisbury, MD, which hosts over 600 guests.

Doug credits his success as a chef and restauranteur to the tremendously talented people he has worked with throughout his career and to his family for being understanding of the rigorous nature of the culinary world. Doug lives in Fenwick Island with his wife Lisa and their children, Emma and Chase.

Paul G. Suplee CEC, PC III is a private chef, college professor, writer, photographer & blogger who breathes food. He will step on stage with his Wor-Wic Community College Culinary students on Sunday, March 3 at 2pm. Suplee has been active in the professional food service industry since 1983 and has worked in a number of locations across the United States. He is also co-owner of the new Boxcar40. No disrespect to the food stylist world or that of the food writer, but what you see and read from him, love it or hate it, is what you will get at his table. No blowtorches, no crisco-ice cream and no molasses in place of natural glazing, either in photo or word!

For all the Expo details, go to [www.oceancitytradeexpo.com](http://www.oceancitytradeexpo.com)