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**“CHEESE & MAC” FOODSERVICE CONTEST SHOWCASES INNOVATIVE
COMFORT FOOD CLASSICS USING REAL CALIFORNIA CHEESE AND DAIRY**

*Winning Elote Corn-a-Roni Dish Earns Grand Prize, \$5,000 in
Real California Milk’s Virtual Recipe Challenge*

Napa, Calif. (August 31, 2023) – The California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB) today announced the Grand Prize Winner of the “Real California Cheese & Mac Challenge” its inaugural virtual foodservice contest challenging professional chefs and culinary students to develop creative Cheese & Mac dishes using Real California dairy products.

Mary Grace Moss, from Island View Casino in Gulport, Miss, took home the Grand Prize for her *Elote Corn-a-Roni* recipe. *Elote Corn-a-Roni* includes fire-roasted Mexican street corn, crispy bacon, and Real California Queso Fresco and Cotija cheeses and Crema Mexicana. It is garnished with crushed corn chips, freshly chopped cilantro, sliced green onions, and a hint of fresh lime, yielding a full fiesta of flavors.

In addition to the Cheese & Mac Challenge Champion title, Moss will receive \$5,000 – which includes \$2,000 for being named a finalist and \$3,000 for the grand prize.

“All of the chefs demonstrated great innovation with their approach to each recipe. We were pleased with the contest response, which is part of our continued partnership with chefs and next generation culinary professionals to highlight their talents and the versatility and performance of California dairy products as key foodservice ingredients,” said Mike Gallagher, Business and Market Development Consultant for the CMAB. “Chef Moss’ entry is the perfect example of how the classic combination of cheese and mac can be elevated with trending flavors and California cheeses and dairy made with sustainably sourced milk from family farms.”

The 2023 Cheese & Mac Recipe Challenge finalists and grand prize winner are as follows:

- **GRAND PRIZE WINNER: Elote Corn-a-Roni** – *Mary Grace Moss, Island View Casino, Gulfport, Miss.*
 - Description: With south-of-the-border flare, this cheese and mac dish includes fire-roasted Mexican street corn, crispy bacon, cilantro, lime and Real California Hispanic-style cheeses and crema.
- **Autumn Cheese & Mac Swirls** – *Lauren Katz, The Difference Baker, Ashburn, Va.*
 - Description: Savory pasta roll-ups made with five Real California cheeses. Each roll is filled with bacon, butternut squash and fried sage, and topped with crunchy garlic, cheesy breadcrumbs.
- **Birria Cheese & Mac** – *Zoe Adelstein, The Undiscovered Taste, LLC, Providence, R.I.*
 - Description: Flavorful shredded beef birria is combined with creamy cheese and mac featuring birria stock, Real California Monterey Jack, Oaxaca and Cotija cheeses, lime and green onions.
- **Buffalo Chicken Cheese & Mac** - *Eyoiel Adeda, Homeroom Restaurant, Oakland, Calif.*
 - Description: Cheese and mac with Real California sharp Cheddar and Monterey Jack cheeses, grilled chicken, spicy buffalo sauce and scallions, topped with toasted breadcrumbs and a drizzle of ranch.
- **Freak A Leek Shells & Cheese** – *Blair Campbell, Hillsboro Pub, Hillsboro, W. Va.*
 - Description: Potato leek soup is the base for this creamy cheese and mac that features five classic Real California cheeses, large-shelled pasta, and a crispy panko and cheese crust.
- **Jerk Soul Egg Roll** – *Elizabeth Williams, PhatHeadz Foodie, Newark, N.J.*
 - Description: This handheld take includes jerk chicken breast, candied sweet potatoes, collard greens and cheese and mac featuring Real California sharp Cheddar, Mozzarella and Monterey Jack cheeses in a crisp, fried egg roll wrapper.

Finalist chefs each received \$2,000 for their entries. A digital recipe book with detailed recipes of the six dishes is available at the [Cheese & Mac Recipe Challenge site](#).

California is a reliable, consistent source of sustainable dairy products used by chefs throughout the world. As the nation’s largest dairy state, California boasts an impressive lineup of award-winning cheesemakers and dairy processors, that help drive dining innovation nationwide.

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About Real California Milk/the California Milk Advisory Board

The California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB), an instrumentality of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, is funded by the state's dairy farm families who lead the nation in sustainable dairy farming practices. With a vision to nourish the world with the wholesome goodness of Real California Milk, the CMAB's programs focus on increasing demand for California's sustainable dairy products in the state, across the U.S. and around the world through advertising, public relations, research, and retail and foodservice promotional programs.

The Foodservice Division of the CMAB supports foodservice operators and distributors that use Real California dairy products. The CMAB offers marketing and promotional support for foodservice operators that purchase dairy products with the Real California Milk seal, which means they are made with 100 percent milk from California's more than 1,100 family dairy farms, using some of the most sustainable dairy practices in the nation.

For more information on sourcing cheese from California, contact the foodservice team at 209.883.6455 (MILK), businessdevelopment@cmab.net or RealCaliforniaMilk.com/Foodservice, [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).