Guy Fieri’s eatery coming to Bakersfield

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Celebrity chef Guy Fieri will open one of his Johnny Gar-
lie’s restaurants in Bakers-
field, a company spokesman
confirmed this week. And this
place, with its seared yellow
fin ahí and bourbon buffalo
meatloaf, is no diner, drive-
in or dive.

Bruce Marano, chief oper-
ating officer for the chain,
responded via email Tuesday
to Californian restaurant crit-
ic Pete Tittl, who was inquir-
ing about the restaurant’s
rumored plans to open at The
Marketplace in the southwest.

“Yes, what you have heard
is correct! We are very excited
to be entering the Bakersfield
market. . . . See you in Bako
soon!”

Marano referred Tittl to two
of his associates, who didn’t
respond by press time to
questions about when the
restaurant will open or
whether Fieri will visit. Repre-
sentatives of the shopping
center also had not returned
calls for comment by Wednes-
day afternoon.

The Californian reported
earlier this month that chain
executives were eying a
space at The Marketplace for-
merly occupied by Coldwater
Creek.

Johnny Garlic’s has restaur-
ants in Sacramento, Dublin,
Windor, San Jose and Brent-
wood. The chain, which
opened its flagship location in
Santa Rosa in 1996, actually
predates Fieri’s TV fame
(“Diners, Drive-ins & Dives”
and “Guy’s Big Bite” are just
two of the Food Network
shows he hosts).

Johnny Garlic’s features a
fusion-cuisine mix of salads,
sandwiches, flatbreads, pasta,
chicken, seafood and steaks.
Amoung the intriguing items
on the regular menu are the
sashimi won tacos ($14.50),
volcano chicken ($17.50),
cherry barbecue ribs ($28)
and “Old Skool” bananas Fos-
ter ($7.95).

The speciality after-dinner
drinks, all $10, include choco-
late mochi-tini ($10) and the
jammin’ Jamaican.

The value-conscious lunch
to-day menu offers all items — sal-
ads, pastas and sandwiches
—for $10.

Fieri, 46, shot to fame in
2006 after winning Season 2
of “The Next Food Network Star.” He lives in Northern
California with his wife and
two sons.

— Californian dining columnist
Pete Tittl contributed to this
report

Chef Guy Fieri puts finishing touches on a
dish at the Johnny Garlic’s in Sacramento that
opened in April 2013.

The Bakersfield Californian

Eye Street

Museum open for altars-ations

Celebration honoring the
dead to draw thousands
for tributes, festivities

BY STEFANI DIAS
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Death gets a bad rap
this time of year:
zombies want to eat
your flesh, vampires
want to bite your
neck and ghosts want to scare the
daylight out of you. But Dia de
los Muertos — which falls a cou-
ple of days after that other
death-obsessed holiday — is a
chance to celebrate and honor loved
ones.

For the sixth year, the Bakers-
field Museum of Art will hold its
Altars de Familia, an occasion
that allows residents to honor the
dead and celebrate the day. The
event, from 4 to 9 p.m., includes a
party with music, dancing and
vendors in Central Park at Mill
Creek, student contest entries
and the “Photography in Mexico”
exhibit inside the museum in
addition to the homemade altars
in the museum’s sculpture gar-
den.

In response to the celebration’s
growing popularity, the museum
increased the number of altar
spaces from 30 to 50.

“They’re all good spots, but we
didn’t want everybody’s artwork
being crushed together,” said
Rivera, 30. “It’s been fun every year.”

For grandmother Isabel Mar-
zquez, “I still have some of the
items she had in her kitchen,
some jewelry and her favorite
flowers, which are roses.”

Rivera will also honor her Chi-
huahua, Chucho, who died this
year.

This is year marks the fifth
Sixth annual Altar-aciones de Familia
Where: 4 to 9 p.m. Sunday
Where: Bakersfield Museum
of Art, 1930 R St., and Central
Park at Mill Creek
Admission: $3, free for chil-
dren 6 and under
Information: 633-5495

This altar, by Sonyia Alvarez of
Mira Monte High, pays tribute
to pop singer Michael Jackson.

The entry is one among several
featu-ured at the annual Altar-aciones de Familia event.

Altares event for the instructional
assistant at Golden Valley High
School.

“Everyone’s altar is different.
You bring in the spirit or orga-
nizing other people that you haven’t seen in
years and talking to the families,
reuniting with a lot of people.”

The altars reflect both the dearly
de parted and those honoring
them, Rivera said. She will pay
tribute to her grandparents, two
uncles and two cousins with por-
traits she’s painted on glass can-
dle holders to accompany photos
and other personal memorabilia.

“We loved the meaning of the
celebration,” said Rivera, 30. “It’s been fun every year.”

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Liberty High student Anaya Behan’s created a skull art piece for
the Altaras de Familia annual Dia de Los Muertos event at the Bak-
ersfield Museum of Art.

HENRY A. BARRIOS / THE CALIFORNIAN
ALTARES

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year at age 12, with a tribute she designed with sister Brittaney Rivera.

"His favorite treat was Pupperoni so we’ll have that. My younger sister just made a papier-mâché Chihuahua. We’re going to have that with his collar on it.”

Along with family, Briana Rivera will honor Jenni Rivera (no relation), the Mexican singer who died in a 2012 plane crash.

“She loved butterflies, so I’m going to make sure I have a lot of butterflies. I’ve met a couple of her family members and I am going to put (up) pictures I’ve taken with her daughter and her mother.”

Celebrity tributes are almost as popular as family ones, especially among the young. This year’s youth entries — 60-plus calaveras (skulls) and altars from local students — honor many stars, including Gene Kelly, Michael Jackson and Robin Williams, who died in August.

Student works will be displayed in the museum’s banquet room Sunday with first- through third-place winners in skull and altar categories announced at 7:15 p.m.

Munoz said guests should also check out the “Photography of Mexico” exhibit, a partnership with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

BMoA curator Vikki Cruz “will be there to provide mini tours and give information,” Munoz said. “SFMOMA provided the (photo) information in Spanish as well, with laminated cards they provided for us.”

Party in the park

Bilingual volunteers will be assisting on the museum grounds as well as in the park, where the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce will coordinate entertainment and vendors.

“We’re letting the reins loose a little bit,” Munoz said. “There are a lot of logistics and the chamber knows how to handle these big events like (their) Menudo Cook-off.”

The event will debut its first beer garden, and food vendors will sell traditional holiday treats such as pan de muerto and sugar skulls as well as tamales, tortas, burritos, posole, tacos, funnel cakes, deep-pit sandwiches and more.

Francis Alvarez, who serves on the museum’s maintenance staff and moonlights as a makeup artist, will lead her crew in skull face-painting. Other creative types will be selling art and other designs.

“Lots of vendors, tons of artists, independent artisans that sell arts and crafts with a Latin flair,” Munoz said.

Entertainment runs all day on the main stage at the park, starting with the Aztec opening ceremony at 4:15 p.m. featuring dancing from Ballet Folklorico Mi Tierra.

Other performances include live mariachi music by Mariachi Juvenil 30/30, Mexican folk dancing by groups CCAT Bakersfield, Ballet Folklorico Huastecalli, Escuelas Unidas and music from Mento Buru.

Last year more than 5,500 people attended Altares, and Munoz expects more this year.

“Mariachi Juvenil 30/30 is one of the most successful in the youth mariachi organizations in the Central Valley,” Munoz said. “All the mariachi, folklorico groups are very youth-oriented. During the performances, the audience is always packed.”