

Ninth Annual Oysterfest Takes Place May 17 & 18

The Dropkick Murphys' Head A Star-Studded Eclectic Line-Up For The Event That Has Also Become Famous As A Musical Showcase

FOR OVER 50 YEARS OYSTER Festivals have been a popular diversion throughout Ireland with the Galway Oyster Festival and Clarenbridge Oyster Festival being the most popular. So it seemed logical to Myles O'Reilly, owner of O'Reilly's Pub in North Beach to bring one to San Francisco with its wealth of oyster history and the prevalence of oyster farms in the surrounding Bay Area.

And so began the San Francisco Oysterfest nine years ago at Washington Square in North Beach. It instantly became a popular annual event with huge crowds flocking to the square, consuming thousands of the molluscs and lifting a pint or two. So much so that the event became too large for its original home and moved to the larger fields of the Great Meadow at Fort Mason.

Much has stayed the same, oysters still dominate the culinary aspect of the event with over 75,000 expected to be consumed this year's event, and their pairing with Guinness Stout is still the central theme of the event. Much however has changed. For the better.

The event is now recognized as a music festival as much as an oyster festival and 2008 boasts the strongest musical lineup to date.

Saturday features San Francisco based Dubliner, Eoin

Harrington, fresh off recording a new album and poised to break into the music mainstream. Burlesque performers, Yard Dogs Road Show, bring a little zany humor to the event before the two main acts take the stage. Juliette Lewis, actress star of such movie hits as Cape Fear and Natural Born Killers, is enjoying a second career with her band The Licks. Their high tempo rock has seen them rise in prominence over the past four years. Headliner, The Dropkick Murphys, needs no introduction to most. Their brand of punk, heavily influenced by The Pogues and The Clash has taken them to the top of the charts and onto the soundtrack of movie blockbuster, *The Departed*.

Sunday is being billed as 'family day' and offers a more mellow lineup of acts heavily influenced by Folk and Americana. Veteran singer/songwriter Seattle Jim Page—whose songs of social conscience have been covered even by our own Christy Moore—sets the stage followed by LA band Whispertown 2000. Chuck Prophet and Mission Express are already rising stars with appearances on Letterman and The Mother Hips have a huge cult following with their brand of Californian surf soul. Headliner She and Him featuring folk icon M. Ward and actress Zooey Deschanel released its debut album in

March to rave reviews and stole the show at Austin's South by Southwest Festival.

If that's not enough this year's festival offers much added entertainment. Thursday night of May 15 will give us the Miss Pearl Pageant at O'Reilly's Holy Grail on Polk Street. The winning lady will earn her pearls by pouring the perfect pint of Guinness, consuming it quickest, polishing of a dozen oysters against the clock and performing a song. Last year's winner Jenny Mac will be among the judges at this year's event.

At the festival itself the new Oyster Mall will present exhibitions on how oysters have evolved in the Bay Area and how they are grown. Visitors will be able to get shucking lessons, visit the Oyster Store, be educated by cooking demonstrations and amused and entertained by the Shuck and Suck competition.

Myles O'Reilly promises that this will be the biggest and best Oysterfest to date and we believe him.

The San Francisco Oysterfest will be held at the Great Meadow Fort Mason on Saturday May 17 and Sunday May 18, 2008 from 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. each day. Advance tickets for each day are \$20.00 and are available at www.snagtickets.com. For information on the event visit www.sfoysterfest.com.



The Dropkick Murphys

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