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Wine and dine next month at festival Euphoria

BY KIM HASSOLD • CITY PEOPLE WRITER • AUGUST 27, 2008

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Along with a large part of the rest of the world, I spent the last couple of weeks glued to the Olympic games watching swimmer Michael Phelps perform one spectacular feat after another. Every night my family stayed up long past a reasonable hour and dragged ourselves up the next morning with bleary eyes and low energy, but it was well worth every minute of lost sleep.

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The people who design coverage of this event have to be some of the smartest around. In weeks leading up to the actual event, we are introduced to the athletes on a personal level that makes it impossible not to want to be there to cheer on our new friends as they perform. We hear their stories and get really close to the family members who also are frequently on camera as their children, husbands and wives have the chance to test four long years of preparation.

I have to admit that as amazed as we all are with the unbelievable talent of Michael Phelps, it was the relationship with his mother that really stole my heart. Seeing her watch him swim race after race kept me on the edge of my seat, and I'm pretty

sure I'm not the only parent who felt a kinship with that kind of unconditional love.

It's painful that way sometimes, how much we love our children. Even if they are adults now, we still see the little kids inside, a peanut butter sandwich in one hand and a wet towel in the other, still only one disappointment away from needing us.

At the end of every race we saw Phelps search the stands until he found his mother, locking eyes with an acknowledgement of what they had done together.

After one particularly hard contest, he made his way through the crowd to award her one kiss on the cheek before heading down to the adoring crowds waiting for a moment of his time.

Michael Phelps is the one who deserves all of those gold medals, of course. But when he kissed his mom on international TV, I'd say we all won.

Wine and dine Southern style On the topic of ways we all can win, you can attend the highly anticipated food and wine festival Euphoria, formerly Southern Exposure, set for Sept. 11-14.

The event is described by organizers as "a higher state of food, wine and music." Hosted by restaurateur Carl Sobocinski and platinum-selling singer and songwriter Edwin McCain, it will include exclusive tasting events, cooking demonstrations and wine tastings as well as multi-course dinners and live musical performances.

"The event just keeps on evolving," Sobocinski said. "We're in year three now and continuing to make

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changes to make the event better and better."

A Thursday night concert has been added, the Grand Wine Tasting has been expanded to last an entire afternoon and individual tickets will be available to the Guest Chef Wine Dinner Series Sept. 13, according to Sobocinski.

"We're bringing guest chefs from all over the country, great wines from around the globe, national recording artists and musicians," he said. "You will not want to miss it."

Sobocinski said proceeds from Euphoria help fund "Local Boys Do Good," started by Sobocinski and McCain to provide sustenance and support in various forms to organizations in need, focusing primarily on charities in the Upstate.

"All this is for a good cause since proceeds from the event support area non-profits. We've had the honor of giving over \$75,000 back to the community over the first two years and know that number will continue to grow as the event grows year by year," he said.

Events will kick off at 8 p.m. Sept. 11 with an opening concert featuring Chris Isaak. World-class chefs, premier vintners and marquee entertainers will be a part of the weekend. Except for the opening concert, all events serve food and beverages.

Ticket prices vary and can be purchased by visiting www.euphoriagreenville.com or by calling 800-514-3849. Tickets typically sell out, so organizers suggest buying early.

A specific schedule and ticket prices also are available online.

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