

Atlanta Tastemaker Magazine

The Metropolitan Cooking and Entertaining Show Hit Atlanta

Published on May 11, 2011



The Neely's

The Metropolitan Cooking and Entertainment Show (MCES) does exactly what its name entails by giving foodie guests the opportunity to indulge in new foods, see cooking techniques demonstrated by their favorite **Food Network** celebrity chefs and pick up innovative accessories to take back home to hone their culinary skills. From April 30th-May 1st, 2011, the Metro Cooking Show made Georgia its home at the Cobb Galleria just outside of Atlanta.

Launched in 2008 by cookbook author and former tradeshow organizer, Denis Medved, the MCES gives attendees a chance to rub elbows with the artisans themselves and purchase the wares of many local businesses that offer specialty food and drink supplies. An added bonus includes cooking demonstrations by celebrity chefs like Giada De Laurentiis, Paula Dean, and Gina & Patrick Neely preparing something fabulous right in front of our eyes.

On Sunday, I was lucky enough to get a seat in the cooking demo of my favorite Food Network celebrity duos, The Neely's. The Memphis natives successfully maintained the same upbeat, lovey-dovey energy they demonstrate on their popular cooking show, *Down Home with the Neely's*. Unfortunately for my growling stomach, they didn't pass out samples of their food after the demonstration, but they did manage to bring plenty of bottles of their famous barbeque sauce and copies of their cookbook to sell outside in the exhibit area.

After checking out the Neely's, (and buying a bottle of their Original Barbeque Sauce), I wandered around to different exhibitor booths and found some really attention-grabbing giveaways and products. My first stop was at **Jalopy Jelly**, a company that sells jars of specialty candied jalapeno peppers. Since I'm really not a fan of foods that are too spicy I was hesitant to try them at first, but in a true foodie essence, I popped one in my mouth. The cream cheese, jellied jalapeno, and crisp wheat thin were paired so perfectly, had to grab another!

Next, I headed over to a booth that caught my eye called **S.A.L.T. Sisters**. They make flavored salt in the most delightful and unimaginable flavors. Overwhelmed by the choices (and wanting to try almost all of them) I decided to sample the Black Truffle and Spanish Rosemary. Each packet is made from unprocessed and unrefined sea salt and I was surprised at how full of flavor they were. Although I could have spent hours tasting the different varieties, I had to go and make my rounds to the rest of the exhibits (and keep my blood pressure down too!)

With more than 300 exhibitors, there was so much to see and taste! From **The Peanut Butter Co's** The Heat is On super spicy peanut butter to **The Sweet Shoppe's** Amaretto Chocolate Swirl fudge and major hunt to find refreshing **Roobie's Red Tea** Watermelon Mint tea, I couldn't leave with a bag of goodies and nothing from my mom on Mother's Day. She enjoyed a bag of **Dottie's** delightful dark chocolate toffee.

Overall, it was a great day of food and wine tastings, cooking demonstrations, entertaining workshops and shopping. Not to mention, networking with other Atlanta foodies and getting to see my favorite Food Network celebrities in person. Check out The Metropolitan Cooking and Entertainment Show as it makes its way to Houston, Texas in September and Washington, DC in November 2011. The show will be back again in Atlanta next year at the Cobb Galleria usually the last weekend in April. be sure to visit www.metrocooking.com for more details!

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