



*For Immediate Release*

**In Year Two, the Golden Tortilla Goes to Taco Maria,  
As the Corn Empire Strikes Back in KCRW & Gustavo's  
Great #TortillaTournament, Sponsored by Coast Packing**

***HomeState Takes Top Honors in Flour Category; Author/Food Historian  
Gustavo Arellano Wraps Up 2<sup>nd</sup> Quest for SoCal's Best Tortilla  
With 'Good Food's' Evan Kleiman***



VERNON, Calif. (Sept. 16, 2019) – Defending the glory of corn and the honor of Orange County, [Taco Maria](#) walked off with the coveted Golden Tortilla trophy at KCRW & Gustavo's Great #TortillaTournament with Good Food's Evan Kleiman (<https://kcrw.co/2MpQxml>) -- a celebration of the popular staple of Mexican cooking, sponsored by [Coast Packing Company](#), the West's largest supplier of animal fat shortenings, which wrapped up on Sept. 8 at LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes near Olvera Street.

For Taco Maria, the pride of Costa Mesa, it was sweet vindication, having led the category for its iconic blue corn tortillas last year's event but barely missing the golden ring (to the flour power of Sonoratown). Chef Carlos Salgado opened Taco María in 2013 to critical acclaim, creating an *Alta California* cuisine that represents Mexican food by putting heritage corn at its foundation. Taking top honors in the flour category was [HomeState](#), which also snagged the People's Choice Award.

Presented by KCRW (@KCRW), *Taco USA* author Gustavo Arellano (@gustavoarellano) and KCRW *Good Food* (@KCRWgoodfood) host Evan Kleiman (@evankleiman) and team spearheaded this no-holds-barred challenge pitting 64 of Southern California's most iconic tortilla brands mano-a-mano to determine which one reigns supreme. Emulating a sports playoff, it was 32 corn vs. 32 flour tortillas with the Fuerte Five face-off taking place downtown to a hungry, happy crowd (a.k.a. #MasaMadness). As Gustavo put it in his recap, "For the finale, the contenders had to prepare fresh tortillas and present them as is. No butter. No salt. No salsa. Just the plain, unadorned tortilla desnuda."

"Hearty congratulations to Taco Maria for elevating the art of the corn tortilla to new heights," said Eric R. Gustafson, Coast Packing CEO. "And kudos to HomeState's terrific Tex-Mex tortillas – true to Gustavo's description as 'thick, salty and flaky.' We also have a soft spot for [Burritos La Palma](#), which proudly prepares its beans with lard – because flavor matters." Coast Packing Co.'s VIVA lard is the most popular lard in Southern California's Hispanic market.

Gustavo, Evan and fellow KCRW'ers Nick Liao ("Good Food" producer) and Connie Alvarez – along with guest judge comic Cristela Alonzo -- decided the results of a competition that pitted corn and flour tortilla makers from [Oxnard](#) to [Indio](#) to San Juan Capistrano. The team spent the past month scouring Southern California for the best corn and flour tortillas, visiting supermarkets and mercados, restaurants and factories, new spots and places that have been around for generations, using the following criteria: does the tortilla reheat well? Will it quesadilla? And how does it taste?

In closing the event, Gustavo paid tribute to [Ernest Miller](#), the former corporate chef at Coast Packing, who tragically died a week after last year's Tortilla Tournament.

### **About Coast Packing Company**

Now marking its 97<sup>th</sup> year in business, Coast Packing Company ([www.coastpacking.com](http://www.coastpacking.com)), a closely held corporation, is the number one supplier of animal fat shortenings – particularly lard and beef tallow -- in the Western United States. The company sells to major manufacturers, distributors, retailers, smaller food service operations and leading bakeries. The company participates actively in diverse ethnic markets – from Hispanic retail chains, with its VIVA brand, to various Asian specialty markets. Based in Vernon, Calif., Coast Packing Company is regional, national and, increasingly, global. In some cases, supplier relationships are multigenerational, extending back 50 years and more. Coast is a founding member of the Healthy Fats Coalition (<http://www.healthyfatscoalition.org/>).

*For more information about Coast Packing Company, visit: [www.coastpacking.com](http://www.coastpacking.com). Follow us via social media on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/coastpackingco](http://www.facebook.com/coastpackingco), Twitter [@coastpackingco](https://twitter.com/coastpackingco) and Pinterest [www.pinterest.com/coastpackingco](http://www.pinterest.com/coastpackingco).*

**Media contact:**

Ken Greenberg

Edge Communications, Inc.

[ken@edgecommunicationsinc.com](mailto:ken@edgecommunicationsinc.com)

323/469-3397