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CULINARY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM TO LAUNCH IN NEW YORK CITY

Innovative Food Movement Aims to Bring Culinary Expertise and Optimal Nutrition to Restaurants

New York, NY – April 30, 2012 – SPE®, a unique restaurant certification and consulting program designed to enhance the nutritional quality of meals without compromising taste, will make its official debut on May 5th, 2012 at Chicago’s National Restaurant Show. Just as LEED certification has become a symbol of sustainable building, SPE aims to become the most trusted, independent food certification for healthy dining -- a new, simple way for restaurants to address consumer concerns about sustainability and personal health.

The inspiration for SPE was born from the Latin phrase “*Sanitas Per Escam*,” which means literally “Health Through Food.” Founded in 2001 by entrepreneur and restaurateur Emmanuel Verstraeten in Brussels, SPE was first applied stateside in 2008 to the menu at Rouge Tomate, the Michelin-starred Modern American restaurant in midtown Manhattan. “Our goal is to become *the* most trusted authority in the culinary nutrition ‘space,’ which is certainly the way of the future. SPE is not about uninspired diet food or low calories, but about providing healthy and sustainable dining options without compromising taste.” He added, “When a restaurant offers an SPE Certified dish, it demonstrates that in addition to taste, the chef values health, sustainability and a commitment to the greater good.”

SPE Executive Chef Anthony Moraes (an alumnus of celebrated chefs Michel Nischan and Dieter Kochina) and SPE Culinary Nutritionist Natalia Hancock, R.D., work with chefs to develop seasonal dishes that focus on sourcing, thoughtful preparation and an artful approach to combining nutrient-dense ingredients. SPE’s hands-on process of recipe development, applicable to a wide variety of cuisines, means that each chef’s unique culinary vision is kept intact: SPE doesn’t *impose* its recipes, but rather *adapts* existing menu items to make them “SPE Certified.” “I have always been a proponent that healthy dining does not have to compromise taste and I am looking forward to working with many talented chefs to bring this unique concept of dining to restaurants throughout the United States,” says Chef Moraes.

The principles of SPE were developed after nearly 10 years of research, and have been validated by a committee of world-renowned experts affiliated with prestigious research centers, including Eric Rimm, Associate Professor in the Department of Epidemiology and the Department of Nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health, Jeffrey B. Blumberg, Ph.D., Professor at the Friedman School of Nutrition, Tufts University and John P. Foreyt, Ph.D., of Baylor College of Medicine's The Behavioral Medicine Research Center in Houston, Texas.

THE SPE PHILOSOPHY

The SPE philosophy extends beyond the farm-to-table movement of locally sourcing ingredients by applying specific guidelines to the preparation of food to enhance its nutritional benefits. Its unique methods result in delicious-tasting dishes that provide lasting satiety, ensuring one leaves the table energized, with a true feeling of well-being.

The tenets of SPE include eliminating butter and cream from appetizers and entrées and limiting their use in desserts, emphasizing seasonal fruits and vegetables throughout the meal and using "good" fats of higher nutritional quality while limiting unhealthy fats and eliminating industrial trans fats. SPE is also a proponent of using minimally processed foods and highlighting key allergens so diners can make informed choices.

SPE CERTIFICATION AND CONSULTING PROGRAMS

SPE will be available in two formats:

SPE Certified

Launching in April 2012, restaurants can choose one of four levels of certification, *Certified*, *Silver*, *Gold* and *Platinum*. Each level is based on the percentage of dishes that are considered SPE Certified on the menu. SPE Certified restaurants will thus offer diners the opportunity to eat a delicious, nutritionally balanced meal outside of the home.

SPE Consulting

SPE's culinary and nutritional team offers a wide range of customized consulting services to address specific needs of the food service and hospitality industry.

SPE's ultimate vision is to become the most trusted symbol of nutritional quality, resulting in making dining out even more appealing to a broader range of consumers while at the same time bringing a new level of consciousness about health and sustainability to American restaurants and the hospitality industry.

For more information on how to become SPE Certified, please visit www.SPEcertified.com.

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