



CARIBBEAN
HOTEL
ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:

Lorraine Ortiz-Valcárcel, lortiz@caribbeanhotels.org

Melissa Rivera, mrivera@caribbeanhotels.org

Tel 787 725 9139/Fax 787 725 9108

HI RESOLUTION DIGITAL COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS AVAILABLE AT

WWW.CARIBBEANHOTELASSOCIATION.COM/CHTCPHOTOS.HTML, AND BY REQUEST.

CREATIVITY AND LEARNING REIGN AT TASTE OF THE CARIBBEAN 2007, MIAMI
~ Judges commend Caribbean chefs on high standards at regional culinary competition;
Puerto Rico and Trinidad & Tobago share top honors ~

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (June 25, 2007) – Taste of the Caribbean 2007, held last week in Miami, Florida, served up the talents of 13 Caribbean culinary teams, who earned the praise of the judges responsible for assessing the competitors' respective performances. On Monday, June 18th, national teams from Anguilla, Bahamas, Barbados, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, Curaçao, Grenada, Puerto Rico, St. Martin / St. Maarten, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, and the United States Virgin Islands, competed simultaneously in a live kitchen environment, preparing their own unique Caribbean menus based on a mystery basket of ingredients.

In the end, Trinidad and Tobago dominated the National Teams Category with a gold medal performance and the highest scores overall which earned them honors as Caribbean Culinary Team of the Year 2007, as well as the highest honors in mixology for Raymond Bernard, 2007 Caribbean Bartender of the Year. This marks the third national team win for Trinidad and Tobago, a first for Taste of the Caribbean. Meanwhile, the Puerto Rico Culinary Team took home both the 2007 Caribbean Chef of the Year and the 2007 Caribbean Pastry Chef of the Year awards, won by Chef Fernando Parrilla and Chef René Olmeda, respectively. Puerto Rico reached its own milestone, becoming the first national culinary team to have won the chef of the year award five times.

The awards, highest honors for food and beverage professionals in the Caribbean region, was presented by the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), with sponsorship from Angostura Ltd., Bahama Breeze, Buckhead Beef, Certified Angus Beef, Halperns' Purveyors of Steak and Seafood, and the U.S. Meat Export Federation.

At a special awards breakfast following the first round of competition, Rick Crossland of Bahama Breeze, Head Judge for the culinary competition and sponsor of the event, took the opportunity to draw attention to the high points of the cooking competition and urged competitors to continue on the same path. "Continue to embrace and showcase the unique dishes, ingredients and methods of preparation that make your island's cuisine distinctive," encouraged Crossland. "Continue to incorporate artful and colorful presentations with your demonstrated understanding of portion size and nutritional balance." In addition to the skills demonstrated, Crossland lauded the initiative of many of the teams, which bring students and apprentices to the competition to provide them with a learning and growing experience.

HEADQUARTERS:

1000 PONCE DE LEÓN AVENUE, 5TH FLOOR • SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO 00907 • PHONE: 787-725-9139 • FAX: 787-725-9108

MIAMI OFFICES:

2655 LEJEUNE ROAD • SUITE 910 • CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA 33134 • PHONE: 305-433-5900 • FAX: 305-569-0431





Taste of the Caribbean™ 2007 Special Bartender Awards:

Most Creative Vodka Drink - Steve Potter, United States Virgin Islands

Most Creative No-Alcoholic Drink - Harrison Williams, Bahamas

Most Creative Rum Drink - Derrek Joseph, Bahamas

Most Creative Overall Drink - Adrian Bynoe, Barbados

Most Creative Use of Angostura Bitters - Catherine Niles, Anguilla

Taste of the Caribbean™ 2007 Special Culinary Awards:

Most Innovative Dish - Sint Maarten / St. Martin

Hans Schenk Commemorative Award for the Most Innovative Menu – Bonaire

Spirit of the Competition – Suriname

Best Use of Certified Angus Beef - Bahamas

Best Use of Angostura Bitters - United States Virgin Islands

Taste of the Caribbean™ 2007 Team Medals

Bronze - British Virgin Islands, Curaçao, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname;

Silver - Anguilla, Bahamas, Barbados, Bonaire, Grenada, St. Maarten/St. Martin, and USVI;

Gold - Puerto Rico and Trinidad & Tobago.

In addition to the competitions, each national culinary team hosted a demonstration of its country's indigenous cuisine, highlighting the region's rich diversity and variety. Barbados, British Virgin Islands, and Anguilla nabbed the top scores in this presentation - placing in first, second, and third place, respectively.

In both the culinary and bartender competitions, chefs and bartenders competed against established criteria rather than each other, which allows for a clear definition of excellence, unaffected by the relative levels of the competitors' skills. In addition, all received detailed critiques of their performance from competition officials, adding a professional development component to the event.

Taste of the Caribbean was established in 1987; it strives to promote the development and refinement of contemporary Caribbean cuisine. The event was held in conjunction with the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Conference, June 17-19, 2007, in Miami, hosted by CHA and American Express, with sponsorship from Choice Hotels International, Foster's Group, Interval International, The New York Times, and Yesawich, Pepperdine, Brown & Russell.

For more on the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Conference and Taste of the Caribbean™ 2007, visit www.caribbeanhotelassociation.com.

#