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BERKSHIRE CHEFS BRING “WHOLE BERKSHIRE HOG” TO NYC’S JAMES BEARD HOUSE

Dinner Highlights Culinary Culture of Berkshires

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Stockbridge, Mass (December 29, 2010) On February 4, 2011, the James Beard Foundation presents The Whole Berkshire Hog, an evening showcasing the culinary talents and farm-to-table efforts of several of the most innovative chefs of the Berkshire region. The foods prepared will be raised, grown and foraged in the Berkshire region.

The Berkshire region is known for its rolling hills and fertile valleys; there are over 66,000 acres of farmland in Berkshire County, Massachusetts. This is the second event by a group of like-minded Berkshire chefs to present the multifaceted culinary artanship of the region in a venue with the mission “to celebrate, preserve, and nurture America’s culinary heritage and diversity.” The Berkshire area boasts a distinctive culinary movement characterized by a group of sophisticated chefs whose culinary styles are informed by the ever-changing bounty of New England’s seasons and the spirit of collaboration that pervades this close-knit group of farmers, producers and chefs. The unique culinary culture of the Berkshires is informed by an historical farming culture of dairy, orchards and raising animals on pasture (pasture is the county’s biggest “crop,” contributing to the year-round sustainability of the region’s farms). There is a distinctive body of work being produced by Berkshire chefs through the crafts of charcuterie and butchery.

Organized by Brian J. Alberg, Executive Chef and Food & Beverage Director at The Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, the Beard House event will present the cuisine of six chefs working in the verdant Berkshire region today. This event marks Alberg’s eighth appearance at the Beard House. Alberg has been instrumental in galvanizing a Berkshire culinary movement - as a chef supporting local farms, as a farmer raising his own heritage breed pigs (Berkshire, Tamworth and Old Spot) at his Bacon on the Side Farm, as a mentor for youth interested in culinary arts, and as a member of Berkshire Grown’s Board of Directors. According to Alberg, “this food pays homage to the farmer, producer and grower, as well as the animal itself. This is my way of giving thanks and showing respect to those who provide our food and drink by preparing their harvests and products with love, care and skill. The whole animal is used as not to minimize the importance of any part of it and it is joined and complimented by the bounty that our region offers.”

Dinner Showcases Talents of Six Berkshire Chefs and the Products of Berkshire Farms & Culinary Artisans

The Whole Berkshire Hog reception and dinner is a collaboration among a variety of Berkshire chefs, farmers and producers. The participating chefs are: Chef Brian Alberg of The Red Lion Inn (Stockbridge, MA); Chef Nicholas Moulton of Mezza Bistro/Mezza Restaurant Group (Williamstown, MA); Chef/Owner Lester Blumenthal of Route 7 Grill (Great Barrington, MA); Chef Chris Amendola, Allium/Mezza Restaurant Group (Great Barrington, MA); Sous Chef Matthew Duley of The Red Lion Inn (Stockbridge, MA), and Chef/Owner Dan Smith of John Andrews (South Egremont, MA). Red Lion Inn Sommelier Dan Thomas selected the wines that accompany the dinner’s reception and six courses.

The evening begins at 7:00PM with a reception in the Beard House’s charming Greenhouse Gallery as guests enjoy the following assortment of hors d’oeuvres: French-style Bratwurst Corn Dogs with Ioka Maple Mustard (Brian Alberg), Smoked Tomato & Bacon Bloody Mary (Matthew Duley), Grilled Chorizo with Overmeade Farm Potato Galette (Lester Blumenthal), Pork Rinds & Beer Powder (Chris Amendola), Pig Tail Torchon with Sauce Gribiche (Nicholas Moulton).

The dinner courses consist of the following: Porchetta di Testa with Pickled Vegetables, Peperoncini & Micro Arugula (Nicholas Moulton); Smoked Taft Farm Sweet Corn Bisque with Barrington Ale Braised Pork Shoulder, Crispy Fried Buttermilk Onions & Cilantro Oil (Lester Blumenthal); 48-Hour Sous Vide Spare Ribs with House-made Mustard Kimchi & Carolina BBQ Fluid Gel (Chris Amendola); Grilled Maple-cured Pork Loin, Bayley Hazen Blue Buttered Hominy & Balsamic Braised Kale (Brian Alberg); Slow-roasted Pork Belly, Poached Farm Egg, Dressed Winter Arugula &

Cheddar Toast (Matthew Duley), and Mayan Chocolate Cake, Coffee Ice Cream and Candied Bacon Caramel (Dan Smith).

The chefs sourced menu ingredients from a number of Berkshire region farms and artisans including: Bacon on the Side, Ancramdale, NY; Berkshire Mountain Distillers, Sheffield, MA; Equinox Farm, Sheffield, MA; Ioka Valley Farm, Hancock, MA; Overmeade Farm, Lenox, MA; Jasper Hill Farm, Greensboro, VT; Joshua's Egg Farm, Sandisfield, MA; Shelburne Farm, Shelburne, VT; Mighty Food Farm, Pownal, VT; Peace Valley Farm, Williamstown, MA and Taft Farm, Great Barrington, MA. The dinner takes place at 7:00PM at the James Beard House located at 167 West 12th Street. The price is \$130 per person for James Beard Foundation members and \$170 per person for the general public. For reservations, please call 212.627.2308.

Destination Boasts Powerful “Buy Local” Movement

Small-town living, and its insular nature, along with a longstanding concern for the environment typical of people who work closely in it, has fostered a culture of sustainability that permeates life in the Berkshires. The region's fertile valleys nurture over eighty independently owned farms that provide produce, meat, poultry, charcuterie, artisan cheeses and more. In particular, Brian Alberg's buying practices have a direct impact on the community as he sources a large percentage of The Red Lion Inn's menu ingredients through the Berkshire Grown (www.berkshiregrown.org) network of farmers - contributing over \$400,000 annually to the local economy. There is no better embodiment of the community's commitment to the “buy local” movement than BerkShares (www.BerkShares.org), the region's legal currency that is only accepted by local businesses (including The Red Lion Inn) - over two million BerkShares have been circulated since the currency's introduction in 2006.

Brian J. Alberg, Executive Chef and Food & Beverage Director The Red Lion Inn

Chef Alberg is a native of Copake, NY, in the Berkshire foothills of neighboring Columbia County, where he began his culinary career as an apprentice at the former l'Hostellerie Bressane. After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y. in 1987, he oversaw the kitchens in a number of high-profile Berkshire area restaurants earlier in his career, first as head chef at the Underhill Inn in Hillsdale, NY, and later at the 1780 Egremont Inn in South Egremont and the Old Inn on the Green in New Marlborough. He left the area in 1993 to become Executive Chef at Dudley's Restaurant in Westchester, NY, where he earned a “Very Good” rating from the New York Times and made the first appearance at the James Beard House. Alberg went on to work as chef for several Marriot luxury properties, then on to the Old Saybrook Inn & Spa, a AAA Four Diamond property. Alberg began his tenure at The Red Lion Inn in July of 2004. He is a member of the James Beard Foundation and is on the Board of Directors of Berkshire Grown, an organization dedicated to promoting the support of local farming and strengthening the relationships between local farmers and restaurants. He also serves on the board of the Railroad Street Youth Project to provide young people with the opportunity to explore the culinary arts alongside a professional chef. Alberg has appeared on Good Morning America, Chronicle, NECN's TV Diner with Billy Costa, Albany (NY) News Channel 13 and WGBY's On the Menu! (Springfield, MA) and in The Boston Globe, Hudson Valley Magazine and Gastronomica. Alberg resides in Kinderhook, NY.

Lester Blumenthal, Owner/Chef, Route 7 Grill, Great Barrington, MA

Lester Blumenthal started life in Brooklyn, NY. A graduate of Stuyvesant High School and Hamilton College, he learned early on about the beauties of Berkshire County (camp for a 10-12 year old has lasting effects). A self proclaimed “foodie” and commercial design industry entrepreneur and executive, he decided to trade in his real job for a chance to root himself into the local community and work with local farmers and suppliers. A new restaurant is born with a true spirit of local. “I've lived in the Berkshires for 12 years and have always hankered for a casual, accessible restaurant and bar with great food that takes advantage of the local bounty - unbeatable produce and lovingly raised livestock and poultry. I'm delighted that we've been able to put together a committed, experienced team to make it happen.”

Matt Duley, Sous Chef, The Red Lion Inn, Stockbridge, MA

Growing up in Maine with parents who enjoyed cooking and eating together as a family, Red Lion Sous Chef Matt Duley's passion for food developed at a young age. After mastering basic culinary skills in high school, Duley went on to

study at a Le Cordon Bleu affiliate, the Atlantic Culinary Academy in Dover, NH, where he garnered significant knowledge of and experience in classical French cooking techniques. He then spent six years as Chef de Cuisine for the Harraseeket Inn in Freeport, ME, a leader in green and sustainable practices in that state. Inspired by the farm-fresh ingredients delivered daily to the Inn throughout the seasons, Duley enjoys the spontaneity of determining a special based on what farmers bring that day. He believes in the importance of eating as locally as possible and helping to spread that important message. Lastly, Duley just likes to have fun with food and that playfulness comes through in the creative combinations and colorful, sculptural presentations that are his signature.

Chef Chris Amendola, Allium Restaurant + Bar/Mezze Restaurant Group

Chef Chris Amendola developed a passion for the culinary arts at a young age. He grew up in St. Augustine, FL, where as a young boy he often accompanied his mother to work at a local restaurant. He was fascinated with the dynamics of the kitchen, enjoyed the fast-paced environment and realized he was destined to become a chef. Amendola began his restaurant career at 15, starting out as a dishwasher. Determined to work his way to the top, he began his formal training at the Southeast Institute of Culinary Arts in St. Augustine and graduated at the top of his class in 2003. He continued to follow his passion and eventually became the sous chef and pastry chef at Fresco, a restaurant in his hometown. Amendola relocated to Orlando to become a junior sous chef at Todd English's Blue Zoo. There he gained experience working in the kitchen of a fine-dining restaurant with high volume and a fast-paced environment. His next move brought him to Charleston, SC, where he not only held the position of chef de partie at McCrady's, but also worked as a farmer at Thackary Farms, garnering a passion for fresh homegrown vegetables, herbs and meats. He planted, cultivated, harvested and sold the fruits of his labors to many local restaurants. Most recently, Amendola was chef de cuisine at Cafe Dupont, located at the Dupont Hotel in Washington, DC. Amendola brings an array of life experiences to the kitchen at Allium. He is passionate about using heirloom ingredients such as grains originating from the 1800s and hopes to incorporate these into dishes at the restaurant. The essence of his cooking captures a Southern influence with a unique presentation putting a fun twist on classical flavors. Outside of the kitchen, Amendola writes his own blog (www.Chrisamendola.wordpress.com) where he documents his experimentation with food and the research he has done for his dishes. Amendola is excited to be involved with the farm-to-table movement in the Berkshires and to be surrounded by a community of dedicated farmers, artisan producers and chefs in the Berkshire region.

Nicholas Moulton, Sous Chef, Mezze Bistro + Bar/Mezze Restaurant Group

A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY, Nicholas Moulton is an accomplished sous chef from North Adams, MA. Working closely with Mezze Bistro's head chef Joji Sumi, Moulton executes a developing menu highlighting local foods from farms in the Berkshire region. He is heavily exposed to independent growers and producers, assisting in the harvesting and butchering of ingredients for the restaurant's menu. Moulton is responsible for daily mise en place, production and assistance with weekly menu changes of this highly successful farm-to-table restaurant, part of the Mezze Restaurant Group. Prior to his position at Mezze Bistro + Bar in Williamstown, MA, Moulton worked as sous chef at The Orchards Hotel in Williamstown. In this role, he was responsible for the supervision of staff over three meal periods daily and assisted the chef in maintaining the restaurant's AAA Four-Diamond Award. Moulton has also held stages and apprenticeships at the renowned restaurants Blantyre (Relais & Chateaux), L'Espalier, Wheatleigh and Sonsie. He believes in supporting sustainable agriculture and holds a strong commitment to the farm-to-table movement and the growing mission of Mezze Restaurant Group.

Dan Smith, Chef/Owner, John Andrew's Restaurant, South Egremont, MA

Dan was brought up on a family farm in Iowa. His family has been farming for generations. Dan studied agriculture in college, but realized that his passion was not in growing food but in cooking it. His connection to food comes from his experience of fresh food grown on the family farm. Dan's longstanding connection to fresh, local food is rooted in his childhood, and is the basis of his menu at John Andrew's. Dan is committed to buying local, organic, sustainable products. He has been working with local farmers for the last twenty years. He works with area small farmers and producers to develop his menu around their products. He is inspired by the the produce they bring to his kitchen door. Dan treats ingredients and employees with respect to create a beautiful dining experience for his customers. Not only does he work with area farmers, he has also created his own garden on the property which supplies produce for the restaurant. The commitment to local products and service is evident in the dining experience at John Andrews.

Daniel Thomas, Sommelier, The Red Lion Inn

Sommelier Daniel Thomas brings extensive knowledge of oenology to The Red Lion Inn dining experience. Thomas completed the first level of the Court of Master Sommeliers and is currently studying and tasting in preparation for the next level of testing. He furthers his studies by participating in meetings of a tasting group of industry professionals as well as tasting over 500 wines each year through his own research and travels. Inspired by the advancements in food and wine over the last decade, Thomas most enjoys introducing guests to new wines, beers and cocktails along with unexpected combinations. On staff since February 2007, Thomas expanded the Inn's wine list to include over 400 wines with a focus on artisan producers from around the world. The Red Lion Inn was awarded the Wine Spectator Award of Excellence for the twelfth consecutive year in 2010.

The Red Lion Inn

A charter member of Historic Hotels of America and winner of the Wine Spectator award for excellence, The Red Lion Inn (c. 1773) has been providing food and lodging to guests for over two centuries. It offers 108 antique-filled rooms and suites, formal and casual dining, a gift shop, pub with nightly entertainment and a full range of amenities including free WiFi, a year-round heated outdoor pool, in-room massage therapy. The Inn is recommended by National Geographic Traveler, The New York Times and The Boston Globe and has won awards and been noted for its commitment to sustainability. For more information, contact 413-298-5545, or visit www.redlioninn.com.

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