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ECCO RECEIVES TWO INTERNATIONAL RESTAURANT & HOTEL AWARDS

Fifth Group Restaurant in Atlanta Goes Above and Beyond Hospitality Industry Standards

ATLANTA (June XX, 2008) – Ecco, the latest addition to Fifth Group Restaurants[®] repertoire that has been wowing Atlantans and visitors alike with Mediterranean-style cuisine since opening in May 2006, is now being recognized internationally for its wine list and status as one of the best new restaurants in the world.

This month, the International Restaurant and Hotel Awards™ (IRHA) announced Ecco as the second best new restaurant in the world (the first in the United States – second only to Glen Etive in New Zealand) and the restaurant with the second best wine list among value restaurants.

“Our original goal when opening Ecco was to create a neighborhood dining option for guests looking for something new and fresh,” says Fifth Group Restaurants Partner Robby Kukler. “The restaurant’s progressive menu and unique wine list are innovative yet still comfortable for diners, and I think these are the qualities that stood out to the IRHA and are what we feel very proud to have been honored for by such an esteemed organization.”

The IRHA is the world’s most prestigious awards ceremony recognizing the best value, moderate and luxury travel establishments that go above and beyond industry standards. IRHA received over 1,000 submissions from 50+ countries around the world, and the jury reviewed submissions from bed & breakfasts, top restaurants, chains, six-star luxury hotels, boutique hotels and independent restaurants and hotels in April 2008.

The awards program categories pertained to value, moderate and luxury restaurants. Restaurant subcategories for each included best design, best brunch, best views, best café, best of city, best specialty item, best ethnic cuisine, most organic/sustainable, best dessert, best wine list, best new restaurant and best hotel restaurant.

Ecco’s nationally-recognized wine list is one of the city’s most adventurous and includes exclusive selections from some of the world’s outstanding boutique vineyards in addition to well-known European vineyards.

“I’m thrilled to be a part of a restaurant group that has so positively impacted Atlanta’s dining scene,” says Fifth Group Restaurants Beverage Director Vajra Stratigos. “Recognition from the IRHA suggests that, for the first time, our city has garnered the attention of our international peers and patrons. Ecco’s wine list was developed with the guest in mind, which is both reflected in its content and unique arrangement. As worldwide dining sophistication continues to increase, we find that value and approachability are central to the growing awareness and the diner’s expectations. It’s important to me that we continually look for ways to keep enjoyment simple and quality at its summit,” adds Stratigos.

(more)

IRHA Honors Ecco/ add one

Judges rate each submission from one to twenty (one being the lowest, twenty being the highest) using their professional background and the category review guides created by the IRHA Advisory Board. The scores are tallied and recipients are announced in each subcategory. The first, second and third place restaurants and hotels are the highest scoring submissions in each subcategory.

The Jury is a board of esteemed hospitality industry professionals with extensive experience in each category field and includes hosts and personalities seen on the Food Network, HGTV, Travel Channel, UKTV, BBC Food, Travel Channel International and representatives from Cool Restaurants, Cool Hotels, Citysearch, Fodor's Travel Guides, Hungry? City Guides and a host of others. A full list of jurors is available at <http://www.IRHAwards.com/Main/jury.php>.

The 2008 International Restaurant and Hotel Awards will honor Grand Award Recipients and IRHA Award Honorees on November 16, 2008 at the home of the Golden Globes, The Beverly Hilton, in Beverly Hills, California. The star-studded gala ceremony will be hosted by Mark DeCarlo from *Taste of America* on the Travel Channel and will include a Special Spotlight on New Orleans along with the presentation of the 2008 IRHA Award Honorees, Recipients & Grand Award restaurants and hotels.

Ecco is located at 40 7th Street at the corner of Cypress Street in Midtown. Operating hours are Monday through Thursday from 5:30 p.m. to 11 p.m.; Friday and Saturday from 5:30 p.m. to 12 a.m.; and Sunday from 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. The bar opens everyday at 4 p.m. and has extended hours along with the patio. Valet parking is available, and all major credit cards are accepted. For more information, call 404-347-9555 or visit www.fifthgroup.com.

Fifth Group Restaurants is the privately owned company that operates Atlanta restaurants South City Kitchen[®] *Midtown*, South City Kitchen *Vinings*, Food Studio[®], La Tavola Trattoria and Ecco, as well as Bold American[®] Catering, a catering and events company with onsite services at the Event Gallery at the King Plow Arts Center and offsite at private homes, offices and Atlanta's premier venues. For more information, call 678-302-3251 or visit the company's newly updated website at www.fifthgroup.com.

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