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17th ANNUAL NEW ORLEANS WINE & FOOD EXPERIENCE UNCORKS PROGRAM PLANS
Louisiana Superdome, Live Auction and Exclusive Events to be Toasted

New Orleans, Louisiana – The New Orleans Wine & Food Experience (NOWFE), one of the most prestigious festivals of its kind, celebrates 17 years of wine and food with a five-day extravaganza, May 21-25. The 2008 event brings together world-renowned winemakers, celebrated chefs and industry insiders in a showcase of signature events and one-of-a-kind seminars designed to entertain, educate and inspire. “NOWFE explores some of the most innovative and exciting trends in the culinary world,” states Howard Brown 2008 NOWFE President. “This year we intend to bring some new elements to the event, such as a Louisiana Chef Cook-Off, and expand on the recent addition of VINOLA, by adding more upscale events and premium wines.” The secret of success for NOWFE is that it has the perfect blend of exceptional wine, extraordinary cuisine, expert panelists and lots of fun in the quintessential setting... New Orleans.

The 2008 event will kick off on Wednesday, May 21st with vintner dinners in some of New Orleans’ most celebrated restaurants, followed by the traditional Royal Street Stroll on Thursday, and culminating with Grand Tastings in the internationally recognized Louisiana Superdome on Friday and Saturday. Joyce Godbold, NOWFE Executive Director reveals, “All Saturday Grand Tasting attendees will have the opportunity to watch and cheer for their favorite Louisiana Chef while the Louisiana Seafood Promotion & Marketing Board hosts The Louisiana Seafood Cook-Off. Louisiana’s top chefs will compete for the chance to represent Louisiana in the Great American Seafood Cook-Off against America’s most notable chefs.

Additional festival highlights will include a live auction and an expanded VINOLA!
VINOLA, NOWFE’s 2007 premium tasting event, was so popular it has been expanded to include two upscale wine seminars; a VINOLA dinner with outstanding wines and a surprise guest, sponsored by Viking; as well as the exclusive Tasting with up to 120 elite wines. Attendees of the VINOLA events will enjoy a rare opportunity to mingle with notable winemakers, while sampling exceptional wines from around the world.

Several featured seminars and events of the 2008 schedule include:
• Going, Going, Gone!~ Don’t miss your chance to bid on once-in-a-lifetime experiences at NOWFE’s first Live-Auction. Auction lots will include all-inclusive trips, and VIP perks you can’t buy anywhere else. You may even see a package or two with a notable artist, athlete or musician! Of course, there will be lots of fine wines up for bid at the accompanying silent auction. This event takes place on Thursday, May 22 from 4:30-5:30pm at the Ritz-Carlton. Vinola ticket or advance reservation required.
• **VINOLA!** ~ Exclusive tasting event. *Thursday, May 22 from 2-4 pm at the Ritz-Carlton.*

• **Krewe of Cork** ~ While "Strolling" down Royal Street you are invited to join in the revelry as the Krewe of Cork parades through the French Quarter donning wine and grape related costumes, while throwing beads, and corks, of course! Krewe of Cork is the Official Parade of NOWFE. *For more information: www.kreweofcork.com*

• **14** ~ Steve Reynolds will take your palette on a tour of Napa Valley, with a Meritage blend that captures the essence of Napa...made with one barrel from a vineyard in each of Napa's 14 sub-appellations.

• **From Spain to Dumaine** ~ For 37 years, Louisiana was under Spanish rule...Just long enough for Spain to influence the architecture, culture and culinary history of New Orleans. Local food critic, Tom Fitzmorris, will be joined by four of New Orleans' most acclaimed chefs, who will explore these "*tradiciones culinarias españolas!*"

• **Cocoa Vin** ~ Chocophiles and Oenophiles alike will experience euphoria during this heavenly tasting of wine with its most sensual companion.

• **Red, White & Fin** ~ Join Chef John Besh & Ziggy "The Wine Gal" Eschliman, as they team up at The Besh Steakhouse to pair each of three seafood dishes with a red and a white wine. You will fall hook, line and sinker for Louisiana Seafood!

• **Chef + Sommelier = Perfect Pairings!** ~ Tap into the ultimate harmony that transpires between an exceptional chef and an expert sommelier, when they collaborate to create the perfect balance of flavors on some of New Orleans' best menus.

• **Wild About Game & Wine!** ~ Hunting for the proper wine to pair with game? Join Chef John Folse, author of *After the Hunt: Louisiana's Authoritative Collection of Wild Game & Game Fish Cookery*, for a cooking demonstration and lesson on properly pairing wine with wild game.

**NOWFE is a non-profit organization. Proceeds from the 2007 event benefited the Louisiana Restaurant Association’s School-to-Career Program, The University of New Orleans School of Hotel, Restaurant & Tourism, The Chef John Folse Culinary Institute, Delgado Community College Culinary Arts Program, New Orleans Firefighter's Fund, The Deuce McAllister's Catch 22 Foundation, The Broadmoor Improvement Association, Inc, and the Emeril Lagasse Foundation. The full program will be listed on the NOWFE website along with a link to purchase tickets in early spring. For additional press information, including downloadable images, visit www.nowfe.com.**

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