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**Celebrity Judges Name Dan Rooney's Cafe & Bar Champion of Food Festival Burger Battle
Empire City Casino's New Restaurants Make Headlines Before Doors Even Open**

October 12, 2012 – Top culinary talent faced off in a battle of the burgers at the annual **2012 Greenwich Food & Wine Festival** hosted by Serendipity Magazine. The first-ever **Burger Battle** event promises to be the start of a long tradition for the three-day gourmet festival featuring talent from Fairfield and Westchester Counties.

Celebrity chefs of national fame sat in judgment of some of the area's most popular establishments, including *The Cos Cobler*, *Darien Social*, *The Ginger Man*, *My Favorite Place* and the ever-popular *Shake Shack*. But it was a restaurant that has yet to even open its doors to the public that blew the celebrity judges away. The judges unanimously declared **Dan Rooney's Cafe and Bar** the champion of the first annual **Greenwich Food & Wine Festival Burger Battle**.

Dan Rooney's Cafe & Bar, one of two new restaurants coming to **Empire City Casino at Yonkers Raceway**, devoured the competition. **Executive chef, Christopher Lee** and **chef de cuisine, Julia Doyne** pushed the proverbial culinary envelope, serving up an aged beef burger with brie, tangy onions, watercress, tomato, and honey black pepper aioli on a brioche bun. The flavorful combination kicked off an inquisition by the judges into the specific ingredients and meat grind, with several professing that their well-developed palates surely tasted the decadence of foie gras in the burger.

Chef Lee appeased the judges by detailing the team's culinary secrets, ensuring them that it was the tangy onions, grilled and then pickled with red wine vinegar, combined with the aged brie that they were mistaking for foie gras. He went on to divulge that the watercress bitter greens helped to balance the sweetness in the honey black pepper aioli, which served to not only temper the aged brie but also bring some heat to the burger.

The celebrity judges (pictured) included **Graham Elliot** of *MasterChef*, *Iron Chef America* and *Top Chef Masters*; **Joe Campanale**, restaurateur, sommelier and owner of *dell'anima*, *L'Artusi* and *Anfora* of NYC; **Duff Goldman** from *Ace of Cakes*, television personality and executive chef of Baltimore-based *Charm City Cakes*; **Ted Allen**, Emmy Award winning host of the hit series *Chopped* on the *Food Network*; **John Stage**, founder of famed New York *Dinosaur Bar-B-Que*; **Amanda Baer**, *Serendipity Magazine* food editor, and Patch.com's best burger poem contest winner, **Susan Franco**.

"This was our inaugural Burger Battle and the judges, audience and chefs really enjoyed it," said **Molly Galterio**, Assistant Publisher of Serendipity Magazine. "This will undoubtedly become a much anticipated tradition for the festival. Dan Rooney's won by a landslide and it was well-deserved. The celebrity judges agreed that this burger really blew them away."

"It was great to win the Burger Battle, especially by a judging panel of this caliber," said **Chef Christopher Lee**, Executive Chef of Dan Rooney's Cafe and Bar at Empire City Casino. "Dan Rooney's is about elevating pub food to the next level. I don't buy into the idea that a bar menu has to rely heavily on fried food and low-brow snacks. Here we take traditional pub classics and incorporate seasonal ingredients and layer flavors to keep things fresh and new. I use a lot of the same techniques used in fine-dining kitchens, but keep the dishes comforting and approachable," **Lee** continued.

In addition to the beefed up burger, **Dan Rooney's** also got raved reviews on the corned beef and cabbage that was also served at the festival.

"We make a great corned beef," claimed **Chef Lee**. "We braise it for 8 hours so it's super tender. We choose very fatty briskets. The cabbage is pretty standard...really tender cabbage that is cooked with herbs and spices. But the killer ingredient that puts it over the top is the Country Mustard Sauce: chicken jus base, lemon juice, lemon zest, white wine, shallots, country coarse mustard, and cream."

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With an anticipated opening of January 2013, **Dan Rooney's Cafe and Bar** will prepare a wide variety of traditional pub food in a high-energy atmosphere catering to sports enthusiasts, with flat screen televisions throughout the pub for live sporting events and simulcast horseracing. Dueling pianos will provide nightly entertainment.

Chef Lee is a nationally recognized talent, having been named "Rising Star Chef of the Year" by the James Beard Foundation, and as one of *Food and Wine* magazine's "Best New Chefs". Chef Lee earned Michelin stars while at Aureole and Gilt restaurants, and was selected to participate in Bravo's inaugural season of *Top Chef Masters*.

Lee was not the only award-winning culinary talent representing Empire City Casino at the Greenwich Festival. **Chef Fabienne Eymard**, the executive chef of **Pinch**, an innovative premium yet casual restaurant which is also currently under construction at the casino, delighted thousands of festival attendees with her creations of **Cod Fish Brandade** consisting of poached salted cod combined with crushed potatoes, seasoned with garlic olive oil and served with crispy crouton and black olive tapenade; **Shrimp Cocktail** of jumbo shrimp cooked in lemon marinade, served with homemade horseradish cream, spicy tomato syrup, and confit lemon zest; and a **Smoked Salmon Club** of toasted Pullman bread, spread with dill and capers mayonnaise, smoked salmon slices, fresh watercress, lettuce and hardboiled egg.

Pinch will feature an open kitchen, raw bar and pastry counter in a vintage diner-style environment, but the beer program will undoubtedly serve as a main attraction. **Pinch** will feature "table side beer taps" and a "tap wall" adorned with one hundred tap heads showcasing craft beers on tap, all from regional and local breweries based exclusively in New York State.

Chef Fabienne Eymard is originally from southwest France and has a depth of experience working at a diversity of restaurants in the United States and France including the classical three-Michelin starred *Taillevant* in Paris under the guidance of her mentor Alain Soliveres, and the sublime one-Michelin starred *Caprice* in Switzerland known for its fresh cuisine. **Eymard** was most recently the Executive Sous Chef at *Adour* in The St. Regis Hotel in New York. With working experience both here and abroad, **Chef Eymard** brings to **Pinch** a vision of simple yet premium house-made American classics with a fresh twist.

About the festival: The second annual Greenwich 2012 Food + Wine Festival took place from Friday, October 5th through Sunday, October 7th at Roger Sherman Baldwin Park in Greenwich, CT, with all proceeds benefiting Paul Newman's Hole in the Wall Gang Camp. The event featured a Culinary Village tent with delicious tastings and demonstrations from more than 90 exclusive food, wine and spirit experts, BBQ Pit Masters, celebrity book signings, a beer garden, and live performances by rock and blues singer Gregg Allman and band.

About Empire City Casino at Yonkers Raceway: Empire City Casino is a full entertainment destination offering 5,300 slot machines, video roulette, electronic craps, and baccarat tables, Italian cuisine in Nonno's Trattoria, trackside dining in the Empire Terrace Restaurant which overlooks the track for live harness racing, an International Food Court with a wide-ranging menu, year-round live harness racing five nights a week, live entertainment six days a week, including karaoke, comedy, jazz & blues, and the best party and latin bands in the tri-state area. The multi-faceted Good Time Room is available for parties, benefits, weddings, and major events for up to 400. Empire City Casino at Yonkers Raceway is located at 810 Yonkers Avenue (at Central Avenue) in Yonkers, New York, Westchester County, (I-87 to Exit 2) and is open seven days a week from 9:00 AM to 4:00 AM. For more information call 914.968.4200 or log onto www.empirecitycasino.com.

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CELEBRITY JUDGES: Courtesy of Serendipity Magazine

Caption: Clockwise from bottom, left: Duff Goldman, Graham Elliot, Serendipity's food editor Amanda Baer, George Mendez, Joe Bastianich, John Stage, Joe Campanale, Patch contest winner Susan Franco, and Ted Allen at the Greenwich 2012 Food & Wine Festival Oct. 6, 2012 at Roger Sherman Baldwin Park in Greenwich, CT.



CHEF CHRISTOPHER LEE Courtesy of Brooke Ruskaup

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