



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, SEPT. 4, 2008

CONTACT: *Matt Tunnell, foodservice marketing specialist*
NCDA&CS Marketing Division
(919) 733-7912 or matt.tunnell@ncagr.gov

The Left Bank recognized as top fine-dining restaurant in the Best Dish in NC contest

RALEIGH – The Left Bank Restaurant at The Sanderling Resort & Spa in Duck has earned the 2008 Fine Dining Award for the Best Dish in North Carolina restaurant contest.

Award-winning Chef Joel Sardinha and staff created a seven-course tasting menu, “From the Earth to our Table, a Taste of North Carolina,” paired with Westbend Vineyard wines from Lewisville.

Sardinha’s winning menu consisted of Crab Slew Oysters with Aged Sherry Mignonette; Yellow Seedless Watermelon Salad with arugula, toasted pine nuts, feta cheese, lavender-infused balsamic vinaigrette; Jumbo Lump Crab Galette with Scallop Panada; Seared Shrimp, Lobster Mushroom Butterbean Succotash, Ramp Puree and Popcorn Shoots; Line-caught Rockfish with Abalone Mushroom, Cippolini, Spinach and Garlic Puree; Slow-braised Pork Belly with baby squash, raspberry, caramelized sweet onion and veal glaze; Blackberry-Scuppernong Grape Granite, finished off with Bittersweet Chocolate Soup with Dark Rum caramelized White Peaches, Cinnamon Sugared Beignet with White Chocolate Chantilly Cream.

“North Carolina is known not only for its beautiful vacation destinations from the coast to the mountains, but its tremendous cuisine using fresh local ingredients,” said Matt Tunnell, N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services foodservice marketing specialist. “North Carolina farmers can grow and produce just about anything. This tasty variety of ingredients inspires chefs to create culinary perfection.”

The Best Dish in N.C. restaurant competition is the official contest of the NCDA&CS Goodness Grows in N.C. marketing program. The competition, open to all N.C. restaurants, determines which serve the best fare the state has to offer.

“While the food is the main element earning points, it’s not the only criteria being measured by the judges,” Tunnell said. “Each restaurant is also judged on how well they promote the local cuisine.”

Restaurants compete in two categories, Fine Dining and Casual Dining, with the potential to earn a total of 100 points from each of three judges. Menus are judged on five categories: Feature & Promotion, Creativity, Plating & Presentation, Taste and Use of N.C. Products. Each restaurant could feature one to five courses, with the main ingredient of each course being a North Carolina commodity.

Restaurants sent in entry forms from January through March. Eight finalists were chosen in both fine and casual dining, based on their use of N.C. products, creativity and their marketing plan for promoting the dishes entered. Six food service professionals, three in each category, served as judges and visited each finalist as mystery shoppers from May 1 and Aug. 1.

The Best Dish in NC competition was created to recognize and reward the efforts of restaurants and chefs who use North Carolina products regularly in their menus and to increase public awareness of the quality of food, restaurants and chefs in North Carolina. Awards will be officially presented before the Bobby Flay cooking demonstration at the N.C. State Fair on Monday, Oct. 20.

To see pictures and descriptions of this year’s winning dishes, visit www.goodnessgrows.org and follow the links for the Best Dish in North Carolina competition.