

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lee Anne Garner

Marketing Director

(504) 442-8373

New Orleans New Year's Day on Today *Menu Showcases Need to Support Small Farmers & Seafood Purveyors*

New Orleans restaurateur Dickie Brennan and Chef Darin Nesbit of Palace Cafe are invited to appear on the Today Show in New York City, Friday, December 30th to create a New Orleans New Year's Day menu. **The menu showcases produce from small farmers and seafood purveyors in effort to gain support for the Louisiana Small Farm Survival Fund, which was established by the Red Stick Farmer's Market, and is managed by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.** The Today Show, hosted by Katie Couric and Matt Lauer is broadcast nationally on NBC affiliates 7:00 am - 10 am, Monday – Friday.

"Great ingredients small farmers and fishermen bring us is what makes our cuisine so special. Just like New Orleans which is rebounding, small farmers and those who provide great products in the region, are doing just that: they're rebounding. But for many, it will take time and they need our help," Dickie Brennan said.

"Right now, we're getting great ingredients. There's just a limited supply. We've been told that over 75% of small farmers have suffered structural damage due to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. And with all of the devastation, many have suffered distribution losses too. Many of their customers: restaurants, Farmers Markets and stores in our region have not yet re-opened," Brennan added.

Brennan grew up in the famed kitchen of Commander's Palace and learned early on that the best produce was local. Long before Farmers Markets brought their exceptional produce to consumers, his father Dick Brennan Sr. and his Aunt Ella Brennan encouraged local farmers to grow all year. They even financed some crops to make sure the best ingredients were available at their Garden District restaurant (*At that time, small farmers could not compete with large California and Florida farms*).

The commitment to local ingredients continues at Dickie Brennan's restaurants and was evident at a November 6, Twilight Harvest Dinner benefit for the Baton Rouge Economic and Agricultural Development Alliance, the Redstick Farmer's Market organizer. The BREADA benefit was held at Purdin Koi Farm - Boisvert Arabians in Erwinville, Louisiana owned by Scott Purdin and BREADA Board Director Susan Turner.

(More)

New Orleans New Year's Day
Page Two of Two

Served in a beautifully decorated barn, the Twilight Dinner featured produce from the Red Stick Farmer's Market, and was prepared by Chefs from Dickie Brennan's restaurants: Gus Martin of Dickie Brennan's Steakhouse, Jared Tees of Bourbon House and Darin Nesbit of Palace Cafe. Dickie Brennan will soon have two of his French Quarter restaurants open. Bourbon House re-opened Wednesday, October 6 (*five weeks and two days after Hurricane Katrina*). Palace Cafe will re-open Tuesday December 27, and Dickie Brennan's Steakhouse, which sustained the most damage, will re-open in late April or May of 2006.

On the Today Show, New Year's Day dishes will be served with champagne: Louisiana Oysters with Creole Mignonette and Local Caviar, Redfish on the Half Shell topped with Myer lemon beurre blanc and sautéed jumbo lump crabmeat. The Redfish will be accompanied by Mirliton Stuffed with Gulf Shrimp, Eggplant and Andouille Dressing. Of course, no southern New Year's Day menu would be complete without Black-Eyed Peas and Cabbage. Chef Darin Nesbit will also create Black Eyed Peas with Louisiana Popcorn Rice (*for luck*) and Abita Beer Braised Greens (*which features 10 types of greens including cabbage for wealth*). For dessert, Bourbon Milk Punch, Sweet Potato Pecan Pie featuring Opelousas sweet potatoes topped with sweetened Creole Cream Cheese, and Divinity Fudge, Pralines, and Louisiana Strawberries will be served.

"I understand that some viewers might wonder with all the devastation, how can we possibly celebrate on New Year's Day? Well, we need to. Right now we need our traditions. It's part of our healing process. We'll celebrate New Year's Day with our family and friends over a wonderful meal," Dickie Brennan said.

To help Small Farmers in the region, Today Show viewers will be encouraged to visit www.foundationsforrecovery.org to donate to the Louisiana Small Farm Survival Fund. Dickie Brennan also hopes to increase demand for great ingredients by encouraging viewers to come to New Orleans. "I want to tell them that more demand helps spur the recovery of small farmers, fishermen, and our economy. More restaurants and hotels are re-opening everyday. We're ready to serve great New Orleans meals using the best local ingredients," Brennan added.

For recipes and additional information including photos from the Twilight Harvest Dinner, Dickie Brennan and Chef Darin Nesbit photos, background on Dickie Brennan and on his three restaurants, please contact Lee Anne Garner at 504.442.8373. For more information on BREADA, the Red Stick Farmer's Market, or the Louisiana Small Farm Survival Fund, please contact Copper Alvarez with BREADA at 225.324.0176.

(End)