

For Immediate Release
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DiRoNA Announces New Leadership for 2007

New York, NY (November 2006)– The Distinguished Restaurants of North America (DiRoNA), a not-for-profit association of approximately 800 fine-dining restaurants that recognizes and promotes excellence in dining, announces its new leadership for 2007. A new chairman, vice chairman and 2nd vice chairman/treasurer were announced recently at the DiRoNA Annual Conference and Gala, alongside four new directors of the Board. DiRoNA's Officers and newest board members began their terms in October 2006.

2007 Chairman John Metz, Jr. is chef and co-owner of Atlanta-area DiRoNA restaurants Hi Life kitchen & cocktails and Aqua Blue Restaurant & Bar. Metz's love affair with the kitchen originated in his father's restaurant business, where he started as a dishwasher before moving on to prep cook and eventually running the kitchen. He attended Penn State University and the Culinary Institute of America before beginning his career in some of New York City's most exclusive restaurants. In addition to his role as DiRoNA Chairman, Metz serves the restaurant industry as a member of the board of the National Restaurant Association and of the Georgia Restaurant Association.

Peter D'Andrea will serve as vice chairman of DiRoNA in 2007. D'Andrea is principle of Culinary Insight, Inc., a consulting company to the food service industry out of Nashville, TN, that provides a wide range of services soundly based on D'Andrea's extensive and varied experience. Prior to opening Culinary Insight, D'Andrea served as Food and Beverage Director for Gaylord Opryland. With more than two decades of experience in the culinary field, D'Andrea's distinct creativity and knowledge have garnered accolades from respected culinary institutions such as the internationally renowned James Beard Foundation and publications such as Food Arts Magazine.

Tim Creehan assumes the role of 2nd vice chairman/treasurer while continuing on as DiRoNA's marketing chair. Creehan owns and operates Beach Walk Crystal Beach in Destin, FL,

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and will open two additional restaurants in early 2007 - Beach Walk Redfish Village in Santa Rosa Beach and Chops 30A in Seacrest Beach. Prior to Beach Walk, Creehan served as executive chef and founding partner of Destin's award-winning Marina Café for ten years. In 1992, The American Culinary Foundation named Chef Creehan one of the "youngest and most accomplished certified executive chefs in the United States." Creehan has also developed a patented line of non-stick marinades, Chef's Grill Plus, and two cookbooks, *Simple Cuisine of Chef Tim Creehan* and *Flavors of the Gulf Coast*.

The newly appointed directors to the Board include **Brad Brennan**, President, Commander's Palace (Las Vegas, NV); **Vincenzo Gabriele**, Owner, Vincenzo's (Louisville, KY); **Michael O'Keeffe**, Owner, The River Café (Brooklyn, NY) and **Kevin D. Schwartz**, General Manager/Sommelier, Horizons Restaurant at the Grove Park Inn, Resort & Spa (Asheville, NC).

"DiRoNA has ensured a terrific group of leaders for the upcoming year," said outgoing Chairman Charles "Chick" Marshall. "I am excited with the way DiRoNA is evolving, and I support John Metz in the new initiatives that will be implemented over the coming year."

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About DiRoNA

DiRoNA was established in 1990 to promote the fine dining industry. This non-profit organization conducts independent restaurant inspections and offers the only fine-dining guarantee in North America. The DiRoNA distinction is bestowed upon only the most distinguished fine dining establishments. To be eligible, restaurants must be in operation, under the same ownership and theme, for a minimum of three years. The rigorous, anonymous inspection process scrutinizes every aspect of the dining experience—food, wine, service, physical property and décor. To date, approximately 800 restaurants have earned the DiRoNA distinction.