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January 2012 Date Changes for Cuba Libre Restaurant & Rum Bar's "Pop-Up Paladares" Cooking Series Featuring Four Cuban Chefs

Due to Restaurant Week, new dates for the Guest Chef Dinners at Cuba Libre are Tuesday January 17, Wednesday, January 18 and Thursday January 19th.

Washington, DC, (November 15, 2011) —Cuba Libre Restaurant & Rum Bar, located at 801 9th St. NW Ste. A, is bringing Cuba's most innovative chefs to the nation's capital in 2012, for a special "Pop-Up Paladares" cooking series. Chef/Partner Guillermo Pernot is inviting Cuban chefs he befriended during his multiple culinary exploration trips to Cuba in 2011. The guest chefs will collaborate with him to create a four-course prix fixe menu during their visits. Each of the six featured dinners is priced at \$39 per person (beverages, tax and gratuity not included), and is reserved for 40 guests in the Cuba Libre's new private event space, La Galería. The special dinners will have two seating options, one at 6:00 PM and another at 8:30 PM.

James-Beard award-winning chef Guillermo Pernot has traveled to Cuba three times in 2011. Each voyage has been an inspiration for Cuba Libre Restaurant & Rum Bar's exciting menu, reflecting the current culinary movement that is emerging in Cuba. Chef Pernot is the first American chef in over 40 years to cook in the country and his new "Pop Up Paladares" series is extraordinary as it marks the first time in many decades that an American chef is able to host Cuban chefs to cook in the USA.

"Things are changing in Cuba as the food of these pioneering chefs is getting very light and fresh. These Cuban chefs are using lots of fresh and local ingredients," say Pernot. "The misconception that Cubans only eat beans, rice and picadillo is very wrong. They are also cooking with lots of new, fresh ingredients like Guayaba, Mamey, Anón and Malanga.

On **January 17 – 19, 2012**, Chef Pernot will co-host the first Pop-up Paladar with Chef Luis Alberto Alfonso Perez of El Gijonés, Bar Oviedo, La Terraza and Asturias, whose four popular paladares are all located in the Asturian Federation of Cuba building on Paseo del Prado in Havana, Cuba. Chef Perez, who is fondly known simply as Chef Lucio, has cooked for many visiting dignitaries and his innovative yet simple cuisine has helped transform the culinary landscape of the city. The four-course menu, a collaborative creative effort of the two chefs, will feature **Crudo de Langosta**, lobster salad, pineapple sorbet with truffle oil-infused black sesame seeds; **Ravioles**, eggplant-wrapped raviolis with lamb ropa vieja filling and a hierba buena infusion; **Jabalí**, baby wild boar rib chop with sour orange-canela compote and yuca tamal, and **Flan de Queso**, Pategras cheese flan with guayaba coulis and garlic confit.

More Pop-up Paladares are scheduled for 2012 including **Chef Alain Rivera Santana** of **Doctor Café** in June and a third chef, who will be visiting in October. Paladares are one of the first opportunities for private enterprise allowed by the Castro-era government and these particular chefs are a few of the most respected and renowned in Cuba, serving as food historians as well as being called to cook for visiting dignitaries, heads of state and even traveling abroad as culinary representatives of their country.

Nationally renowned chef and restaurateur Guillermo Pernot is responsible for maintaining the quality, taste and authenticity of Cuba Libre's cuisine. His dinner, lunch and brunch menus envision what Cuba's cuisine would be like today, if it had continued to flourish beyond the golden era of the 1950s. Pernot's dishes are full of color, aroma and style. His culinary success can be attributed to his passionate and flavorful cuisine – a culinary dedication to his roots and family.

In spring 2012, Argentine-born Chef Pernot, accompanied by his Cuban wife, Lucia, whose great-great-grandfather was the island nation's 3rd president, will lead group culinary tours to Cuba. These exciting and educational trips are open to the public and will be the first chance for many Americans to travel to the island which is still restricted

by embargo-era U.S. regulations. During the trips, Chef Pernot will serve as a private guide, providing first-hand connections with Cuban chefs and citizens while the group navigates bustling city life and discovers the emerging culinary scene with visits to state-owned restaurants and paladares, including those participating in Cuba Libre's guest chef series. They will also learn how Cuban cuisine was influenced by the native Tainos and the influx of Spanish, African, Chinese and Haitian-Creole peoples. The group will also visit Ernest Hemingway's Havana home as well as *La Bodeguita del Medio*, where he enjoyed his favorite mojitos, and *El Floridita*, his favorite place for daiquiris.

Pernot is credited for introducing Nuevo Latino cuisine to Philadelphia. His restaurant *¡Pasión!* earned an impressive list of accolades including awards from *Gourmet*, *Philadelphia Magazine* and *Fodor's*. Pernot was named *Esquire's* "Chef of the Year." Additionally, he received two of the most prestigious awards given in the food industry: The James Beard Award for "Best Chef of the Mid-Atlantic Region" and "Best Single Subject Cookbook" for *Ceviche: Seafood, Salads and Cocktails with a Latino Twist*.

Pernot's background also includes the launch of *Vega Grill*, during which *Food & Wine* named him one of "America's Ten Best New Chefs," and *Restaurant Hospitality* named him one of the "Ten Rising Stars." He also spent time in Miami, where he led the kitchen at Gloria Estefan's Latin restaurant, *Allioli* in South Beach.

The "Pop-Up Paladares" series will take place in Cuba Libre's newly renovated private event and dining space, La Galería. The addition will be completed by late fall 2011 and will accommodate up to 52 seated guests and receptions of up to 70 people. Cuba Libre's striking décor allows guests to travel to the forbidden island, making it a unique backdrop for unforgettable parties or delicious meetings. The new space features vaulted ceilings and a double-sided bar that will link the main dining room with the private dining room. The addition will also be equipped with A/V capabilities for presentations, and have a separate sound system for a DJ, and other entertainment options that were previously only available for full restaurant buy outs.

Cuba Libre Restaurant & Rum Bar is located at 801 9th Street (corner of H Street), NW Suite A in Washington, D.C. Cuba Libre Restaurant & Rum Bar serves lunch weekdays, brunch on Saturdays and Sundays and dinner nightly. For more information please call (202) 408-1600 or visit www.CubaLibreRestaurant.com.

About Cuba Libre Restaurant & Rum Bar:

Cuba Libre Restaurant & Rum Bar opened in Philadelphia in 2000, Atlantic City in 2004, Orlando in 2009 and Washington DC in 2010 to much acclaim, giving guests a passport to Cuba's intriguing flavors and culture. The restaurant's name, which translates to "a free Cuba," signifies a hope for the future of the treasured island nation. Two-time James Beard Award-winning Chef-Partner Guillermo Pernot's menus feature tantalizing tastes that reflect Cuba's culinary traditions, as well as the emerging modern cuisine he is experiencing during his continuing travels to Cuba. Cuba Libre Restaurant & Rum Bar is poised for expansion into other new markets. The restaurant is an affiliate of GuestCounts Hospitality which operates a diverse portfolio of restaurant, catering, and nightlife concepts in Philadelphia, Atlantic City and Orlando including 32° Luxe Lounge, Brûlée Catering by Chef Jean-Marie Lacroix and Gourmetro Catering. Principals Barry Gutin and Lawrence Cohen bring a unique combination of expertise to each of their projects and have been partners in the hospitality business since 1994. For more information about Cuba Libre, please visit www.CubaLibreRestaurant.com. For more information on GuestCounts Hospitality please visit www.GuestCounts.com or call 215.922.3200 x132.

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