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**New York's Suba Restaurant Wins Best Sommelier Title at the International
Copa Jerez Finals**

Sommelier Roger Kugler takes top sommelier prize with his Sherry inspired menu

Washington, DC -- The Sherry Council of America is proud to announce that Sommelier Roger Kugler of Suba Restaurant was chosen as the Best Sommelier in the third-annual 2009 *Copa Jerez* food and Sherry pairing competition. Executive Chef Seamus Mullen and Sommelier Roger Kugler, the only non-European duo represented at the Copa finals, traveled to Jerez, Spain to compete against renowned international chef and sommelier teams from six other countries. The Netherlands took home top prize.

Authentic Sherry wines can only come from Jerez – a town in Spain's southern-most province of Andalucía. Jerez is Spain's oldest denominated winemaking region, only legally defined in 1933, but boasting 3500 years of tradition that continues today. Elements unique to this tradition include Jerez's microclimate, experiencing 300 days of sunshine with stiff ocean winds, and the unique chalky, calcium-rich soil known as *Albariza*.

Copa Jerez is the leading international gastronomic event featuring authentic Sherry wines. After two years of semi-final competition, top chefs and sommeliers from restaurants all over the world gather in Jerez to demonstrate their skills and versatility in pairing Sherry wines with their own culinary creations.

"The Sherry Council of America would like to congratulate Suba Restaurant on winning Best Sommelier," says Marc Destito, director of the Sherry Council of America. "Both Seamus Mullen and Roger Kugler are two examples of great American chefs and sommeliers working every day to expand consumers' knowledge of Sherry by showcasing its range and versatility in their restaurants. We were honored to have them represent the United States at this prestigious competition and bring home the coveted award.

Wine Critic Michael Franz Serves as Member of Jury

Nearly one hundred people, including gastronomic leaders, international wine critics, and journalists, attended the competition in Jerez. The seven finalists presented their three dishes before an international panel of judges that included

leading American wine critic and Senior Editor of *Wine Review Online*, Michael Franz. A wine educator and consultant, Franz has also served as wine columnist for *The Washington Post* since 1994.

In addition to a best overall winner and top sommelier, awards were presented to the best overall chef and for the best pairing in each of three categories—appetizer, main course, and dessert.

Mullen and Kugler won the opportunity to showcase their food and Sherry pairings in Jerez by taking top prize at the semi-final competition held at the Astor Center in New York City where they shined ahead of teams from four other top restaurants including Craft Los Angeles, wd-50 in New York, Michy's in Miami, and Sideburns in Tampa. Mullen's winning dishes included an ajo blanco with slightly smoked sardines and pickles paired with Tio Pepe Fino (Kosher), toasted rougnet with pata negra ham paired with Hidalgo Amontillado VORS, and a flan of sheep's milk cheese paired with Gutiérrez Colosía Moscatel.

Suba Restaurant, recently reopened in New York, combines a new flare of contemporary Spanish tapas, “media raciones” and other shared dishes. Mullen, also the executive chef and co-owner of Boqueria in New York, exercises the same freedom he found from cooking in Barcelona with his menu of authentic dishes featuring traditional Spanish cooking, flavors and cuisine. Kugler compliments Mullen's modern take on Spanish cooking with his 250-bottle wine list focusing primarily on Spanish wines including an extensive Sherry selection.

For more information about the competition including photos of the event and a list of each dish and pairing prepared during the competition, please contact Lisa Mendelson at 202.777.3561 or lmendelson@clsdc.com.

Sherry Council of America is the official U.S. representative of the Federación de Bodegas del Marco de Jerez (Fedejerez), the trade organization for all Sherry producers of the Jerez region of Spain. Based in Washington, D.C., the Council works to expand knowledge of the unique geographic characteristics, rich cultural traditions, and generations of winemaking expertise that are central to creating the distinctive range of flavors found in Sherry wines. The Council also works to raise awareness among U.S. policymakers, consumers, and other audiences about the importance of protecting the Sherry name.

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