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Three Acclaimed Restaurants Win at the *Copa Jerez* U.S. Semi-finals
New York's Suba Restaurant wins overall; Michy's of Miami and New York's wd~50 also receive recognition

Washington, DC -- The Sherry Council of America is proud to announce Suba Restaurant as the overall winner of the third-annual U.S. semi-finals for the 2009 *Copa Jerez* food and Sherry pairing competition. Executive Chef Seamus Mullen and Sommelier Roger Kugler will travel to Jerez, Spain in January to compete against renowned international chef and sommelier teams from around the world for the *Copa Jerez* title. Judging for the U.S. competition was led by wine expert Steve Olson, of akawinegeek and a panel of culinary experts and wine writers.

Authentic Sherry wine can only come from the Jerez region of Spain – 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*.

“On behalf of the Sherry Council of America, I would like to congratulate the Suba team on an extraordinary performance at this year's *Copa Jerez* semi-finals,” says Marc Destito, director of the Sherry Council of America. “Both Chef Seamus Mullen and Sommelier Roger Kugler demonstrated an expertise and love of Sherry that we hope to instill in restaurants nationwide.”

Suba Restaurant won the U.S. title while competing in New York last Thursday, December 4, 2008 against four other nationally recognized restaurants and chef/sommelier teams: wd~50, New York; Craft, Los Angeles; Michy's, Miami; and SideBern's, Tampa. In addition to a best overall winner, awards were presented for the best pairing in each of the three courses, with separate honors going to the best individual chef and best sommelier.

Here are the winners in each category:

- First course and dry Sherry pairing - Suba for their Sardina Ahumada Y Ajo Blanco paired with González-Byass "Tío Pepe" Fino (kosher)
- Second course and medium Sherry pairing - Michy's for their Seared Scallops With Rabo Encendido Hidalgo-La Gitana "Jerez Cortado Wellington" paired with Palo Cortado V.O.S. 20 years
- Third course and sweet Sherry pairing- wd~50 for their Soy Custard, Banana, Caramel, Granola paired with Lustau East India Solera
- Best Sommelier- Roger Kugler, Suba
- Best Chef- (tie) Chef Wylie Dufresne, wd~50 ; Chef Michelle Bernstein, Michy's
- Best Overall- Chef Seamus Mullen and Sommelier Roger Kugler of Suba Restaurant

Next month, the acclaimed duo from Suba will compete in Jerez against teams from several nations including the home favorite, Spain. They will present their three-course entry to a panel of expert international judges who will evaluate the food, the pairing and overall presentation.

Suba Restaurant was recently reopened in New York combining 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 Natalie Alhonte Braga at 202.777.3549 or nalhonte@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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