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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***Great Chefs. Great Wine. Great Destinations!* Connecticut Culinary Masters Classic Benefits Connecticut Children's Medical Center with hosts John Mariani and James Gabler. Top CCMC Volunteer--Restaurateur Rich Rosenthal--Will be Honored**

Hartford, CT (May 21, 2008) – The Third Annual Connecticut Culinary Masters Classic to benefit Connecticut Children's Medical Center (CCMC) is scheduled for Friday, June 6, 2008, at the restaurant ON20, One State Street, Hartford. The theme for the wine dinner is ***Great Chefs. Great Wine. Great Destinations!*** It will feature a seven-course dinner prepared by eight of America's most acclaimed chefs.

America's top chefs from Four-Star, Five-Diamond Resorts and Spas will join guest hosts John Mariani, noted food writer, author and *Esquire Magazine* columnist and James Gabler, author of "Passions; The Wines and Travels of Thomas Jefferson."

Richard Rosenthal, president of The Max Restaurant Group, Hartford, will be the recipient of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center Volunteer-of-the-Year award at this year's dinner.

Title Sponsor for the event is Sovereign Bank. Founding Sponsors for the Classic are the restaurant ON20, Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection & Insurance Co., Alphagraphics, BigGourmet.com, Delia/Viking, DT Media Group, and restaurantsct.com. The 2008 event sponsors include Federman, Lally and Remis, LLC, John Hancock Retirement Services, Hartford Marriott Downtown and Max Restaurant Group.

A Champagne Pommery reception, with passed hors d'oeuvres will be poured from 6:00-7:00 pm. It will be followed by a seven-course menu featuring entrées and dessert crafted by the following chefs:

Host Noel Jones, ON20, Hartford, CT; Kyle Ketchum, Spiced Pear Restaurant, The Chanler Hotel at Cliff Walk, Newport, RI; Marc Collins, Circa 1886 Restaurant, Charleston, SC; Hunter Morton, Max Downtown, Hartford, CT; Lynn Mansel, Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, CT; Daniel Chong-Jimenez, The Spa at Norwich Inn, Norwich, CT; Jeremy Martindale, Omni New Haven Hotel at Yale, New Haven, CT; and Chris Eddy, Winvian, Morris, CT.

Their extraordinary offerings will be paired with the following wines, a rarity for even the finest of wine dinners: Opus One; Turley Cellars Zinfandel, 2005; Château Mouton Rothschild and Château Coutet.

Tickets are priced at \$275 per person before May 27, 2008, and \$300 thereafter. The 2008 gala is expected to raise more than \$100,000 for CCMC. Fewer than 30 seats remain available for sale.

More than 50 live and silent auction items will be offered including rare first growths, new and old-world classics, large format bottles, Mystery Boxes and wine storage units.

Travel packages include an overnight stay, wines and dinner will be offered at each Classic chef's restaurant. It is expected that the seven destination packages will raise more than \$30,000. The wines to be paired are Château Mouton Rothschild, Opus One, fine red and white Burgundies and vintage Champagne.

Auction highlights include a dinner for 10 at a private residence featuring courses prepared by Master Chef Noel Jones valued at \$6,000. Wines to be poured include Château Haut-Brion, Château Mouton Rothschild; Opus One, Château Beaucastel, Château Leoville Haut-Brion; Grange; Faiveley, and Château d'Yquem.

Additional guest chef in-home and restaurant dinners will feature chefs creations paired with Dom Perignon, Krug, Cristal and Salon Champagne; Château Mouton Rothschild, Ornellaia, Sassicaia, Solaia, Grange, Faiveley, Ramonet, Duckhorn, Beringer, Turley Cellars and Opus One.

Auction items will also include wine collectibles, wine art, and dinners at 14 distinctive Connecticut restaurants with wine donated from the cellars of noted collectors. Other dinners include a five-course dinner for four with guest host John Mariani valued at \$5,000.

Another auction item will be six seats to a wine dinner hosted by James Gabler at Cynthia Keller's Restaurant du Village in Chester in late January valued at \$1,000.

Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford opened in 1996. It is the only hospital in the state devoted exclusively to the care of children. CCMC has a full range of pediatric services, treating children of all ages from newborns to 18-year-olds. The 135-bed facility includes a neonatal intensive care unit, a pediatric intensive care unit, medical/surgical beds, eight operating rooms, and a 24-hour pediatric emergency department.

As a teaching hospital and home to the University of Connecticut School of Medicine residency program in pediatrics, it is on the leading edge of pediatric care to train the doctors of the future.

The mission of Connecticut Children's Medical Center is to improve the physical and emotional health of children. It encourages and supports basic, clinical and health services research of regional and national significance.

CCMC Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit 501(c) (3) charitable organization that relies on tax-deductible contributions to help support its vital mission of improving health care for children throughout Connecticut.

For additional information, please contact:

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