

ALL-STAR CHEFS SALUTE CULINARY ICON ROGER VERGÉ

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS CONTACT:

Denise Finnegan, R. Couri Hay Creative Public Relations

Phone: 212-580-0835

Email: denise@RCouriHayCPR.com

July 25, 2016 (New York, NY) – On Monday, September 12, more than a dozen of the world’s great chefs will pay tribute to one of their icons, the late **Roger Vergé**. The stellar chef tribute will be held at **The Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers, Pier 61** with limited tickets available on resy.com/verge for \$995 each. Net proceeds from the dinner, organized by veteran event producer Herb Karlitz, will fund a Roger Vergé Scholarship at **The Culinary Institute of America** in Hyde Park, New York.

“Vergé, who opened his 3-star Michelin restaurant, Le Moulin de Mougins, in 1969, is considered one of the greatest chefs of his time. His contributions in the culinary world need to be celebrated, and his legacy memorialized for future generations; that is what this event strives to accomplish,” said Karlitz.

Vergé protégé **Daniel Boulud** is “Chef Chair” for the event: “My job is to organize how all of these amazing chefs—who either worked in Mr. Vergé’s kitchen or had a special relationship with him—will come together to collaborate on a menu inspired by our time with him.” Besides Boulud, participating chefs include: Philippe Bertineau, David Bouley, Terrance Brennan, Cat Cora, Georgette Farkas, Dean Fearing, Remy Funrock, Wilfrid Hocquet, Emeril Lagasse, Francis Mallmann, George Mendes, Richard Reddington, Mark Tarbell and Michael White. “It’s an incredible line-up of chefs, who all jumped at the chance to celebrate a man that had such a positive influence on all of us,” said Boulud. “He was the ultimate professional – so classy, jovial and soulful in the kitchen, with elegance and charm. We all have special memories and stories that we plan to share that night.”

“Mr. Vergé’s restaurant in the south of France was a mecca for artists, celebrities, socialites, presidents and heads of state for more than three decades,” commented Entertainment Impresario **Shep Gordon**, who organized many Vergé-hosted dinners, including one for The Dalai Lama. “Celebrities from Elizabeth Taylor to Sharon Stone, Michael Douglas, Anthony Quinn and James Coburn—scores of them were regulars. A reservation during the Cannes Film Festival was gold,” noted Gordon, who will oversee celebrity tributes for the event.

“A pioneer of introducing Mediterranean ingredients and references into haute cuisine, Roger Vergé was one of the greatest chefs in history,” said Dr. Tim Ryan, president of The Culinary Institute of America. “He was an elegant, charming, and fun-loving man. I remember fondly the times I spent with him at the legendary Moulin de Mougins and here at the CIA. Chef Vergé inspired generations of culinarians in his lifetime, and the college is honored to honor his legacy by creating a scholarship fund in his name.”

###

Chef Roger Vergé

April 7, 1930 – June 5, 2015

Roger Vergé was born in Commentry, Allier, the son of a blacksmith and eldest of three siblings. At 14, after the tragic loss of his father, his mother had him cooking as an apprentice at Le Bourbonnais with Chef Alexis Chanier, a former chef at La Tour d'Argent in Paris. From there he traveled to Paris to La Tour d'Argent and Le Plaza Athénée where he stayed for 4 years (1949-1953).

For the next three years, Vergé traveled to North Africa to work at El Mansour Casablanca and L'Oasis in Algiers. He worked in airline catering from 1956 to 1960 in West and Central Africa.

In 1960, Vergé made his way back to France, where he worked at L'Hotel de Paris, Monaco. For the next eight years, he alternated between Le Club de Cavalière in the summers, and in Jamaica, West Indies, in the winters, except in 1963, when he cooked at the Suvretta House in Saint Moritz under the command of Chef Hartly Mathis.

In 1968, Roger Vergé organized and managed the catering for all of the media at the Winter Olympic Games in Grenoble France.

From the region of Provence and the Mediterranean flavors and spices, Roger Vergé describes his style in "Cuisine of the Sun" (McMillan 1979): "Such is the cuisine of happiness, lovingly combining natural products to produce simple harmonies, endowing the savor of each dish with its perfect culinary counterpoint."

In May 1969, Roger Vergé and his wife Denise, opened their restaurant Le Moulin de Mougins, in a renovated XIIIth century olive mill. The restaurant was such a success that Michelin awarded its first star in 1970, a second star in 1972, and a third star in 1974. It was the fastest ascension for a three-star Michelin Chef at the time.

In 1977, Vergé opened his second restaurant L'Amandier de Mougins -- a converted XVIIth century olive mill, which was awarded two Michelin stars in 1981, making him the first French chef to receive five Michelin stars.

Vergé expanded his culinary empire to include a cooking school at L'Amandier and also consulted on numerous projects and wrote numerous books, which were translated into several languages.

In 1982, along with Paul Bocuse and Gaston Lenôtre, Vergé opened Les Chefs de France and Le Bistro de Paris at EPCOT in Disney World in Orlando Florida. This partnership lasted thirty years.

In 1992, Vergé opened La Cave de Mougins in a renovated XIIIth century olive oil warehouse with a capacity for 5000 bottles of fine wines and spirits.

In 2003, after more than 50-years in the culinary world, having mentored so many accomplished chefs, (see chef list attached) Vergé retired in Mougins, and sold his interest in both L'Amandier and Le Moulin de Mougins.

Adapted from Cordélia Vergé

Participating Chefs & Restaurants

Philippe Bertineau, *Benoit Alain Ducasse New York* (New York, NY)

David Bouley, *Bouley* (New York, NY)

Daniel Boulud, *The Dinex Group* (New York, NY)

Terrance Brennan, *Brennan Group Hospitality* (New York, NY)

Cat Cora, "*Cat Cora's Kitchen*"

Phil DeMaiolo, *Abigail Kirsch at Pier Sixty* (New York, NY)

Georgette Farkas, *Rotisserie Georgette* (New York, NY)

Dean Fearing, *Fearing's Restaurant* (Dallas, TX)

Remy Funrock, *Kiawah Island Golf Resort* (Kiawah Island, SC)

Michael Ginor, *Hudson Valley Foie Gras*

Wilfrid Hocquet, *Fig & Olive*

Emeril Lagasse, *Emeril's* (New Orleans, LA)

Francis Mallmann, *Patagonia Sur* (Buenos Aires, Argentina)

George Mendes, *Aldea* (New York, NY)

Richard Reddington, *Redd* (Yountville, CA)

Mark Tarbell, *Tarbell's* (Phoenix, AZ)

Michael White, *Altamarea Group* (New York, NY)

Herb Karlitz

Founded in 1990 by veteran event marketer Herb Karlitz, the New York-based agency, Karlitz & Company has become the leader in producing food and wine events across the country, including the Food Network New York City Wine & Food Festival, Flavor! Napa Valley, The Chocolate Show, Enjoy Arts & Tastes-St. Pete, and most recently Harlem EatUp!, which he co-founded with celebrity chef Marcus Samuelsson. The agency is known for creating unique experiences in the niche areas of food, wine, luxury and entertainment for a discerning roster of clients including American Express, Breeders' Cup, British Virgin Islands, Chase, EY, Food Network, Merrill Lynch, and Michelin.

Daniel Boulud

Daniel Boulud, a native of Lyon, France, is considered one of America's leading culinary authorities and one of the most revered French chefs in New York, his home since 1982. Daniel is Chef-Owner of 15 restaurants around the world, and is best known for his eponymous, exquisitely refined DANIEL on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Outside of New York, the chef's cooking can be found in London, Singapore, Toronto, Montréal, Miami, Palm Beach, Washington DC, Boston and Las Vegas. Boulud is the author of nine cookbooks, the recipient of multiple James Beard Foundation awards including "Outstanding Chef" and "Outstanding Restaurateur," as well as The Culinary Institute of America's "Chef of the Year Award" (2011) and The World's 50 Best Restaurants "Lifetime Achievement Award" (2015). Boulud was named a Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur by the French government in March 2006 in recognition of his contributions to the advancement of French culture. He is a generous supporter and Co-President of Citymeals-on-Wheels for more than two decades, and is Chairman of the ment'or BKB foundation.

Shep Gordon

Shep Gordon is known for managing the careers of Alice Cooper as well as stints with Blondie, Luther Vandross and Raquel Welch, among others – a career that began with a chance encounter in 1968 with Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix. He even found time to invent the "Celebrity Chef," inspired by a chance meeting with Chef Roger Vergé that led to a long-lasting friendship. Though the chef as star is part of the culture now, it took Shep's imagination, and his moral outrage at how chefs were being treated, to monetize the culinary arts into the multibillion dollar industry it is today. Shep's story was featured in 2014 in the film *Supermensch: The Legend of Shep Gordon*.

The Culinary Institute of America

Founded in 1946, The Culinary Institute of America is the world's premier culinary college. Dedicated to driving leadership development for the foodservice and hospitality industry, the independent, not-for-profit CIA offers associate degrees in culinary arts and baking and pastry arts; bachelor's degree majors in management, culinary science, and applied food studies; and executive education through its Food Business School. Its conferences and consulting services have made the CIA the think tank of the food industry in the areas of health & wellness, sustainability, world cuisines & cultures, and professional excellence & innovation. The college also offers certificate programs and courses for professionals and enthusiasts. Its worldwide network of 49,000 alumni includes leaders in every area of foodservice and hospitality. The CIA has campuses in New York, California, Texas, and Singapore.