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THE KL INTERNATIONAL GOURMET FESTIVAL 11 NOVEMBER - 8 DECEMBER 2005

**KL International Gourmet Festival 2005
Pre-Launch Press Conference
Renaissance Hotel Kuala Lumpur
Tuesday, 25th October 2005**

THE KL INTERNATIONAL GOURMET FESTIVAL IS BACK

KUALA LUMPUR – 25 October 2005

Some people will soon joke that the KL International Gourmet Festival (KLIGF) is giving Kuala Lumpur's chefs a "big head." In a sense they may be right because, as of now, eight brightly coloured double-decker luxury coaches bearing giant images of KL's best known master chefs are on the streets of KL and Singapore. They are busy promoting Malaysia's premier annual gourmet event, the KL International Gourmet Festival which is set to take place from 11th November to 8th December.

One of these special Festival coaches, courtesy of inter city operator Aeroline, carried all the Master Chefs of the festival to the Renaissance KL on Tuesday for a media conference witnessed by Guest of Honour, YBhg Datuk Dr Victor Wee, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Tourism.

Under the royal patronage of the Regent of Negri Sembilan, HRH Tuanku Naquiyuddin ibni Tuanku Ja'afar, and into its fifth consecutive year, KLIGF is a 28 day culinary extravaganza that promotes Kuala Lumpur as a world centre for fine dining.

This year KLIGF, with Visa International as it's the title sponsor, is bigger than ever before. Twenty three of KL's finest dining establishments will be taking part and showcasing a diverse range of cuisines: French, Italian, Japanese, Thai, Middle Eastern, Swiss, Chinese and Indochinese as well as Contemporary European, Continental, Pan Asian and Global Cuisine.

During the Festival the city's top restaurants put aside their commercial differences and work together for the common good.

"We have two very clear aims," says Steve Day, the Festival's Organizing Chairman. "Firstly to stimulate and sustain an ongoing interest in KL's fine dining scene and secondly to increase the overall pool of fine diners for everyone's benefit."

As part of this strategy, the top chefs of the city's premier restaurants create special Festival Menus that are offered to diners at unbelievably low prices. The Festival also promotes locally based chefs and all-year-round dining.

"Unlike festivals elsewhere in the world we do not rely on chefs flying in from other countries for a limited dining promotion," adds Day, who heads up a festival organising committee comprised of the city's leading food gurus. "Instead we emphasise the fact that world class chefs already reside in KL and that they are here all-year-round."

According to Day, KL residents enjoy experiencing new venues and different types of cuisine during the festival, knowing they can repeat the experience with their family and friends at any time throughout the year. He is also pleased with the Festival's knock on effects:

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“Compared to just 5 years ago, the KL dining scene is bubbling with activity. Not a day seems to go by without word of a new restaurant opening up, or a special food and beverage promotion,” he says enthusiastically. “After our four previous festivals, city residents are a lot more familiar with different types of cuisine and have discovered that fine dining in KL is unpretentious, fun and more importantly, affordable.”

The Festival’s title sponsor Visa will also add to each diner’s enjoyment. “Visa has lined up a host of exciting offers to treat and share with our cardholders through our member banks in Malaysia,” says Jeffrey Perera, Visa International’s Country Manager for Malaysia, “We are delighted to be the title sponsor and to further contribute to the capital city’s reputation as a centre for fine dining and excellent service, while at the same time promoting Malaysia as a tourist haven,” he continued.

Visa, is joined in the Festival by Mercedes-Benz - the Official Car, who are offering special Festival offers for Mercedes owners; Heineken - the Official Beer; Fuji Photo Film - the Official Imaging Partner; AXA-Affin Assurance - the Official Insurer; Aeroline - Festival partner; and co-sponsor Vision Four.

Spreading the news about the Festival are heavyweight media partners, ASTRO, The Star, ‘Light & Easy’, Le Prestige and Vision KL. The Festival is also endorsed by Tourism Malaysia and supported by Kuala Lumpur City Hall.

“KLIGF highlights what many already know,” says Visa’s Perera, “that Kuala Lumpur is a great place to get some of the world’s finest cuisine.”

Steve Day is even more emphatic. “Though the governments of neighbouring countries have pumped millions of dollars into promoting their various dining events, our KL festival is widely regarded as the best in the region. Whether the accolade is true or not, we are certainly working towards that goal.”

With more and more foreign tourists and international businessmen taking note of the all-year-round capabilities of Kuala Lumpur’s restaurants, KL is now firmly established on the world’s fine dining map. This is of course good news, especially with *Visit Malaysia Year 2007* on the horizon, and food tourism emerging as a worldwide phenomenon.

“We are in a great position to capitalise on things,” says Day. “We have some fantastic advantages. For example, all the world’s great cuisines are represented in Malaysia. We also have some of the world’s best chefs and restaurants. No other country has anything quite like it - just ask any Malaysian travelling overseas what they miss most? It’s the food of course!” he declares with exuberance. “Nor can anywhere else match our restaurants’ prices which are unbelievably low when compared to fine dining in New York, Paris, London or even Singapore for that matter.”

In summary, the KL International Gourmet Festival plays a vital role in showcasing KL to the world as well as maintaining standards, stimulating growth and attracting revenues for the hospitality industry.

To quote the Organizing Chairman, “Every discipline needs a benchmark of excellence where the crème de la crème can shine. Soccer has its World Cup and the film industry the Oscars. We have the KL International Gourmet Festival.”

Additional KLIGF Events

Chefs’ Charity Auction

One of the events held during KLIGF that no one wants to miss is the Chefs’ Charity Auction. The successful bidder wins a Festival Master Chef for an evening who cooks a five star meal for a group of the winning bidder’s friends. Last year the auction raised over RM230,000 for the Tunku Naquiyuddin Foundation benefiting under privileged children.

KL Epicure International 2005

The largest spin-off event held in conjunction to the KLIGF this year is the KL Epicure International 2005, Malaysia's leading food and wine fair (formerly known as KL International Food & Wine Fair). This two-day event will take place at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre on 12th & 13th November (Saturday & Sunday) from 10.30 am to 7pm.

The KL Epicure International is where you can sample and purchase everything to do with international fine dining – including exotic food, fine wines, cigars, exclusive tableware and other fine dining accoutrements – from the top suppliers and organisations specialising in fine cuisine and the culinary arts. There will also be wine, cigar and coffee appreciation workshops, cooking classes as well as workshops on dining etiquette, dressing with style and the art of mixing cocktails. Admission to the fair is free and day passes to an unlimited number of workshops are available at RM350, but Visa card members can get them at RM299.

Festival Advisory Committee Members

1. YAM Tunku Dara Tunku Tan Sri Naquiah Bt Tuanku Ja'afar
The Princess Royal of Negeri Sembilan
Syarikat Pesaka Antah Sdn Bhd
2. YBhg Tan Sri Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad
Chairman/CEO, Institut Kajian Politik & Ekonomi
3. YBhg Dato' Kok Wee Kiat
Chairman of the Environment Quality Council of Malaysia
Capitaine Lieutenant of the Society of the Musketeers of Armagnac
4. YBhg Dato' Lau Foo San
Managing Director of LP Consultants
Bailli Delegee Honoraire de Malaisie Confererie de la Chaine des Rotisseurs
5. Mr David Teh
Pakatan Reka Arkitek Sdn Bhd
President, International Wine and Food Society, Kuala Lumpur
6. Mr Jeremy Diamond
Vice-President, International Wine and Food Society, Kuala Lumpur
7. Mr Knut R. Herzer
Group Controller, Southern Steel Berhad
Vice President, Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry
8. Encik Asri Ghafar
Chairman, MABAG Holdings Sdn Bhd
9. Ms Su Wai Fun
Managing Director, AsiaReach Events Sdn Bhd

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Important KLIGF Dates

Gala Launch:	10 th November 2005	Mandarin Oriental, Kuala Lumpur
Festival Period:	11 th November – 8 th December 2005	at the 23 Festival Restaurants
KL Epicure International:	12 th & 13 th November 2005	Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre
Grand Finale Dinner:	9 th December 2005	Shangri-La Hotel Kuala Lumpur
Chefs' Charity Auction Dinner	9 th December 2005	Grand Finale Dinner (Shangri-La)

For further information on the KL International Gourmet Festival 2005 and the KL Epicure International 2005, please contact:

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