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CHEF/OWNER RICK HIRSCH OF DAMARISCOTTA RIVER GRILL NAMED “CHEF OF THE YEAR” BY MAINE RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

Chef Rick Hirsch to accept award at March 30 MeRA awards ceremony

Damariscotta, Maine – Chef Rick Hirsch, owner of midcoast Maine’s Damariscotta River Grill (www.damariscottarivergrill.com), has been named the Maine Restaurant Association’s 2010 Chef of the Year. Announced by the Association’s chairman of the board, Mary Dysart Hartt, the award will be presented to Hirsch at MeRA’s Annual Awards Banquet on Tuesday, March 30, at the Holiday Inn by the Bay in Portland (<http://tinyurl.com/ykta95n>).

“Rick Hirsch exemplifies what is so great about Maine’s restaurant community,” said Hartt. “He is an innovative chef who owns and operates his own successful restaurants, he consistently supports local community efforts and charitable projects, and he gives Maine hospitality a great name. This award is certainly well deserved.”



Chef Hirsch along with partner and wife, Jean Kerrigan, have a long history of involvement with their Maine community. The Grill was recognized as a state winner of the National Restaurant Association’s 2008 Restaurant Neighbor Award in recognition of the team’s many contributions to the community they call home, including support of the annual Boy and Girls Clubs Wreath Sale and Chocolate Fest, an annual event that supports Healthy Kids!. The Grill also offers a number of ongoing and innovative programs, such as the Wine Club and the Art at the Grill series, that help keep Maine’s food scene on the local, regional and national map.

“The Maine Chef of the Year award is certainly a career highlight,” Hirsch said. “It is a distinct honor to be recognized by my peers in the culinary industry, and I am very grateful to receive an award for something I enjoy doing so much.”

Hirsch brings more than two decades of culinary experience to his two well-known restaurants in mid-coast Maine. He received his formal culinary training at Providence, Rhode Island’s Johnson & Wales University. His longtime goal of owning his own restaurant came to fruition when Hirsch and Kerrigan opened the popular Anchor Inn Restaurant (www.anchorinnrestaurant.com) in Round Pond, Maine, more than 22 years ago. As popular with visitors as with its loyal fan base of locals, the Anchor Inn serves authentic New England cooking and Hirsch’s top-notch Maine seafood specials.

The couple established their very successful Red Plate Catering business in 1995 and continue to be in demand for events ranging from wedding receptions and anniversary celebrations to holiday events and large corporate gatherings.

In 2004, Hirsch and Kerrigan decided to grow their culinary enterprise and opened the Damariscotta River Grill. The well-regarded restaurant, open year-round and situated just a stone’s throw from the scenic Damariscotta River, is an integral part of the coastal Maine dining scene, and has earned high marks from outlets ranging from *The Boston Herald*, *Boston Magazine*, *The New York Times*, and *Santé* to *Nation’s Restaurant News*, *The Portland Press Herald*, *Maine Boats*, *Homes & Harbors*, and

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Portland magazine. Known as much for its impressive wine list as for its regional, upscale comfort food selections, the Damariscotta River Grill is a favorite of locals, visitors and vacationing celebrities.

About the Damariscotta River Grill:

Since its successful launch in late 2003, the Damariscotta River Grill has firmly established itself as a welcome addition to the coastal Maine dining scene. Owned and operated by husband-and-wife team Rick Hirsch (Executive Chef) and Jean Kerrigan (General Manager), the popular restaurant's creative menu features fresh local shellfish, produce and meats and a *Wine Spectator* Award-winning wine list.

*For further information about Damariscotta River Grill,
or to schedule an interview with Chef Hirsch or General Manager Jean Kerrigan,
contact Ann Ewing at Front Burner PR at Ph: 207/699-5500 or ann@frontburnerpr.com.*

Easily downloadable photos are available at www.frontburnerpr.com/drg

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