



Roberto Arciaga of Renaissance Hotel wins Fetzter Great Beginnings Gold Award

Hérons at Fairmont Waterfront chef wins People's Choice Award

Vancouver, BC (March 4, 2006) – The 28th Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival is pleased to announce that **Roberto Arciaga**, chef at the Coal Harbour Bar at the Renaissance Vancouver Hotel Harbourside, won the judges' choice Gold Award at the Fetzter Great Beginnings Wine and Appetizer Challenge on March 1. The ninth annual Great Beginnings competition is one of 52 events at the festival. Arciaga's winning dish was **Short Rib Caldereta with Arroz de Achuete**.

The 350 attendees at the sold-out competition chose **Geoff Hopgood's** dish of **Braised Lamb Belly, Foie Gras Stuffed Croquette, Fetzter Zinfandel and Date Jus with Toasted Mustard-Seed Froth** as their favourite. He wins the People's Choice Award. Hopgood is chef at Herons Restaurant at The Fairmont Waterfront in Vancouver.

The competition, which saw 10 chef finalists and one student chef finalist vying to see who had done the best job of creating an original appetizer to pair with **Fetzter Vineyards' Valley Oaks Zinfandel**, took place at The Fairmont Waterfront. The Gold Award winner receives a trip for two to the California home of Fetzter Vineyards in Mendocino County to spend time with executive chef John Ash.

Judges chose the finalists from a field of 30 entrants representing restaurants from around British Columbia. Judging took place at Dubrulle's in early February. The judging panel includes **Soren Fakstorp** (chef instructor at The Art Institute of Vancouver – Dubrulle Culinary Arts); **Seann Halington** (wine guide at BC Liquor Stores in Richmond and wine writer with *Richmond News*); **Kenji Hodgson** (author, cofounder of halfaglass.com and wine writer for *The Province* newspaper); **Judith Lane** (food writer at *The Georgia Straight*, *Vancouver Lifestyles* and others); **Rhonda May** (editor of *CityFood* magazine); **Tim Pawsey** (wine and food writer at, among others, the *Zagat Survey*, *Vancouver Courier*, *North Shore News*, *Wine Access* and *Northwest Palate*); **Bruce Stephen** (wine writer with *Vancouver Lifestyles* and *diningoutguide.com*); and **David Scholefield** (expert palate-at-large; coordinator and writer of the Wine Awards at *Vancouver* magazine).

There are three other Fetzter Great Beginnings Wine & Appetizer Challenge events in Canada.

The Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival is a fundraiser for the **Playhouse Theatre Company** and is sponsored by **Chubb Insurance Company of Canada**.

Media contact:
Betty Verkuil – 604-988-9502
media@playhousewinefest.com