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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **Dussini Mediterranean Bistro**

## *Backgrounder*

Dussini Mediterranean Bistro, an upscale and intimate restaurant with a distinctive menu, has emerged in high style from the site of The Old Spaghetti Factory in San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter. With its quality cuisine, comfortable loft bar and billiard lounge, plus its close proximity to downtown hotels, the San Diego Convention Center and Petco Park, Dussini promises to become a popular destination for visitors and San Diegans alike.

Dussini represents a landmark concept for OSF International, owners and operators of The Old Spaghetti Factory restaurant chain. After closing the Old Spaghetti Factory operation here in 2004, the OSF management and marketing teams began looking for a new approach. They analyzed the current bar and restaurant scene and changing downtown demographic. After months of planning, the vision emerged for Dussini, with a warm and friendly atmosphere and an inviting range of exciting Mediterranean dishes from an olive tapenade appetizer, to monkfish *Nicoise*, osso buco alla Milanese and paella.

"The atmosphere of Dussini is a delicate blend of old and new; conveying part of the Gaslamp Quarter's historic past, while simultaneously representing its innovative cultural renewal," said Carrie Richards, general manager. "We also tried to make our Mediterranean menu as colorful and interesting as the San Diego community, which has historical roots in Spain, Italy and Portugal."

## **Local History**

Located at 275 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, at 5<sup>th</sup> and K Street, Dussini resides in a historic brick building designed nearly a century ago by the famous San Diego architect, Irving Gill, whose work included the George W. Marston House and the first buildings for the Scripps Institute of Oceanography.

Dussini is in the heart of San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter, an eight-block long by two-block wide area downtown that's home to nearly 100 restaurants, nightclubs or coffeehouses, and a similar number of shops and galleries. As such, the Gaslamp is one of Southern California's premier destinations for dining, shopping and nightlife. Its roots date back to the 1880s and many Victorian-era commercial buildings remain today, having become homes to art galleries, boutique clothiers and specialty stores.

A century ago the Gaslamp was a bustling warehouse district, and Dussini's building and its interior design still embrace its origins. Designers used matching brick and paid strict attention to historic detail during its recent refurbishing. Until last year, The Old Spaghetti Factory was the beneficiary of the building's unique charm, utilizing the spacious setting as a popular, reasonably priced restaurant for group and family dining.

Since then, a team from OSF developed a concept for a more intimate, upscale restaurant, to feature bold, innovative designs while embracing the structure's storied past. The vision included a restaurant with unequalled warmth and charm, and distinctive from anything else in the region.

## **Atmosphere**

During the remodeling, all new brickwork was painstakingly matched to the existing, maintaining much of the building's original flavor and charm that delighted guests of The Old Spaghetti Factory. But significant changes were made as well. Dussini guests are more likely to dine in smaller parties—couples enjoying a night out, one-on-one business lunches, and small groups of friends getting together. And to create a warmer, more relaxing ambiance, the wood ceilings and columns were sandblasted and then treated with stain, significantly brightening the building's interior.

Dussini occupies four levels: lower, main, mezzanine and upstairs, and its greater luminescence makes the lower and mezzanine levels—with their lower ceilings—a welcoming and intimate place to dine, attractive in a different way from main level seating. There is also a patio for outdoor dining in warmer weather.

Changes were made to the main level to create a warmer, cozier ambiance. The building's redesign brought in many new contemporary features including a steel spiral staircase that winds its way up through the center of the main floor—in a sense dividing the room into halves and giving it a more intimate feel. Custom, two-tiered lighting fixtures were also added to enhance this feeling of intimacy. But the most intriguing addition is the three-story refrigerated wine room that is encased in glass and steel and rises from the lower level through the mezzanine to the loft bar.

### ***Upstairs Lounge:***

The high-ceilinged loft bar features a large U-shaped bar with a granite bar top and granite floor, six persimmon-felt covered tables with customized lighting in a spacious billiard area and leather- and mohair-upholstered stools, chairs and booth seats. For sports lovers, television sets surround the room, making it a great meeting spot before and after Padres games at nearby Petco Park or for enjoying any televised events in splendor. The full bar includes the finest whiskeys and other liquors, excellent wines and a wide selection of the best foreign and domestic beer, with a number of beers on tap, including fine microbrew selections.

There's a full kitchen behind the bar, which serves not only appetizers but also popular Mediterranean dishes from the main menu.

For added comfort, the lounge includes a fireplace with an attractive, innovative, elongated design: ten feet long by two feet high. It's surrounded by comfortable seating and nearby cocktail tables, so guests enjoy food and drink in a friendly, warm environment. The lounge is a perfect place for both couples and large parties to relax before or after their meal, before or after baseball games or cultural events downtown, or for dropping by anytime they're in the Gaslamp.

### **Chef and General Manager**

Dussini's executive chef, Earl Schryver, has a strong background in classic European and Mediterranean cuisine. His mentor was a Swiss chef who arranged successful training programs in Fort Lauderdale and Palm Beach, Florida, and then a year of apprenticeship in Interlaken, Switzerland. Schryver moved west to work as executive chef at the Rancho Bernardo Inn and its sister property, the Surf and Sand Resort in Laguna Beach. He was executive chef on the opening team of the Inn L'auberge and also worked at Rainwater's and The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe. He enjoys collecting wine, going to farmers markets and selecting new ingredients from local farms and growers. Earl is an avid Chargers fan and is known to many in the area as the "asphalt gourmet" for his extraordinary tailgate parties.

Carrie Richards, general manager, is a native to Southern California who started in the restaurant industry 20 years ago. She began her management career at P.F. Chang's China Bistro in 1995 and watched the company grow from four locations to 28 over the next few years. Following P.F. Chang's, Carrie worked for such fine establishments as King's Fish House, i'Cugini on the coast in Santa Monica, Fleming's Prime Steakhouse and Croce's Restaurant in the Gaslamp Quarter.

### **Dussini Cuisine**

As its name indicates, Dussini specializes in classic Mediterranean and European dishes.

With entrees from land and sea and nature's garden, there are plates for everyone to enjoy. The restaurant includes Greek, Italian, Spanish, French and Portuguese recipes, including osso bucco, gazpacho, bouillabaisse, linguisa, veal saltimbocca, paella and many other Mediterranean-style favorites.

While Dussini offers the highest quality foods and exquisitely prepared dishes, menu items are quite affordable. Entrées are typically less expensive than they are at similar Gaslamp bistros. In fact, guests won't find any entrée on the menu more than \$26.50. In keeping with the spirit of the Mediterranean countries of origin, portions are larger than found in most other restaurants. Dussini also offers a full bar and has an extensive wine list, including sparkling wine and champagnes for special occasions.

### ***Starters***

Dussini offers a dozen appetizers that appeal to even the most fickle palates. From delectable seafood plates to fine cheeses to fine greens, guests can select items from a diverse array of choices. Prices are very reasonable, as plates range from five to ten dollars. Starters include:

*Seafood Martini*—Poached calamari, shrimp, bay scallops and mussels tossed in a lime dressing with sweet peppers, olives and fresh herbs, served on a bed of Belgium endive and gazpacho in a large martini glass (\$10.50).

*Jumbo Asparagus Spears alla Milanese*—Breaded in Panko crumbs and Parmesan cheese, fried and served with roasted garlic aoli (\$9.95).

*Italian Prosciutto*—Thinly sliced and served with ripe slices of melon, figs and grilled bruschetta (\$12.50).

*Field Greens with Gorgonzola Cheese*—Field greens, slices of fresh pears, caramelized pecans and Gorgonzola cheese served with Sherry Wine Vinaigrette (\$7.95)

*Mussels au Gratin*—Spanish green lip mussels in a spicy butter and Parmesan crust, served golden brown (\$9.95).

### ***Entrees***

Main course dishes at Dussini represent the most delectable and intriguing recipes from countries throughout the Mediterranean, and are served with a basket of freshly baked artisan breads and rolls. Whether guests are hearty meat eaters, pasta lovers or seafood connoisseurs, Dussini offers top-notch selections, including:

*Osso Bucco alla Milanese*—Veal shank braised in Marsala, herbs, root vegetables and tomatoes, with gremolada on a bed of saffron orzo pilaf (\$25.95).

*Veal Saltimbocca*—Veal cutlets sautéed with fresh sage leaves skewed and sautéed with olive oil, onions, glace de viande, butter, a splash of Marsala wine and Prosciutto ham,

served with potato gnocchi tossed in brown butter (\$19.95).

*Medallion of Beef Tournedo*—Pan sautéed filet mignon in a sauce of cognac, green peppercorns, red wine and cream, paired with potato gnocchi tossed in brown butter (\$29.95).

*Duck con Crosta di Nolce*—Roasted half duck, glazed with a walnut crust, served on a bed of Spanish saffron orzo pilaf with pear chutney (\$19.50).

*Lobster Macaroni & Cheese*—(Signature dish!) Sautéed lobster in a cream sauce with white cheddar cheese, flavored with roasted garlic and white truffle oil (\$19.95).

*Scampi alla Pescadore*—Jumbo prawns sautéed in olive oil, garlic, red onions, diced tomatoes, fresh herbs and a splash of Marsala wine, laid around saffron orzo pilaf (\$22.50).

*Roasted Filet of Monkfish alla Nicoise*—Served with a sauce of black olives, tomatoes, tarragon, capers, white wine, Pernod. Served with sautéed fresh spinach and steamed red potatoes (\$18.95).

*Wild Mushroom con Penne*—Assorted wild mushrooms, red onions, fresh herbs and garlic, sautéed in a creamy sauce, tossed with penne pasta and topped with shredded Asiago cheese (\$14.95).

### ***Salads as an Entrée***

For those interested in meals a bit on the lighter side, Dussini's menu includes a selection of soups, salads and sandwiches, such as:

*Warm Seafood Salad*—Large shrimp, sautéed sea scallops, salmon, monkfish, halibut and sweet mussels in a ginger and sesame dressing with Asiago cheese served on top of field of greens. Fresh fish served when available (\$17.95).

### ***Hours***

On Sundays through Thursdays, Dussini is open for lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and for dinner from 5:30 to 10 p.m. On Fridays and Saturdays, it is open from 11:30 a.m. until 1 a.m. The loft bar serves food and beverages daily from 11:30 a.m. to midnight on Sundays through Thursdays and until 1 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

### **Parent company**

Dussini is owned and operated by Portland-based OSF International, owner and operator of The Old Spaghetti Factory chain of restaurants, which has grown to 45 restaurants worldwide. OSF International is headed by Chris Dussin, president, whose father, Gus, founded the original Old Spaghetti Factory Restaurant along with Chris's mother, Sally, who, as senior vice president of design, continues to oversee the design schemes of OSF restaurants.

### ***Headquarters***

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