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NEW YORK'S TOP CHEFS TAKE TOFU CUISINE TO THE NEXT LEVEL AT THE *TOFU AROUND THE WORLD* COOK-OFF

July 1, 2008, New York, NY — Four of New York's top chefs will put their tofu technique to the test on July 22 at New York City's Astor Center as they battle for the \$5,000 grand prize at the **Tofu Around the World** cook-off sponsored by House Foods, makers of House Tofu, America's most popular brand of tofu, and by Gohan Society, whose mission is to foster an understanding and appreciation of Japan's culinary heritage in the United States. The competing chefs are **Erik Battes**, Chef de Cuisine / Perry St. Café; **Wylie Dufresne**, Executive Chef & Owner / WD 50; **Edward Higgins**, Chef de Cuisine / Insieme; and **Akinobu Suzuki**, Executive Chef / Sakagura.

"Delicious, nutritious and incredibly versatile, tofu is an underappreciated Super Food," said Yoko Difrancia, spokesperson for House Foods. "Too often pigeonholed as just a bland substitute for meat, tofu is in fact so international and multi-faceted that it can be used in all the cuisines represented at our cook-off: Italian, French, Japanese and even molecular gastronomy."

Hosted by the WOR Radio Food Talk personality **Mike Colameco**, the cook-off will be judged by a distinguished panel of food experts, including **Michael Romano**, Executive Chef and partner of the famed Union Square Café; **Peter Berley**, noted health food chef and author of *The Flexitarian Table* and other titles; and **Andrea Strong**, writer and creator of The Strong Buzz food blog. Each chef will prepare two tofu dishes, a savory and a sweet, using House Organic Firm or Extra Firm Tofu and House Organic Soft Tofu complimented by natural and green market ingredients. The tofu recipes from

the cook-off, including the grand prize winner, will be available post-event on the House Foods website at www.house-foods.com.

Tofu is high in protein, low in carbohydrates and has no cholesterol. Tofu's most important ingredient is soy protein, the only plant-based "complete" protein that has all of the essential amino acids. House Foods, which makes House Tofu at two locations in California and New Jersey, uses only non-genetically engineered soybeans grown in the United States.

The Contestants

Wylie Dufresne / wd~50 / Executive Chef & Owner

After receiving a B.A. in philosophy from Colby College in 1992, Wylie Dufresne enrolled at the French Culinary Institute in New York. Upon graduation, Chef Dufresne worked for Jean-Georges Vongerichten at restaurants such as JoJo's and Jean-Georges; as chef de cuisine at Vongerichten's Prime in The Bellagio, Las Vegas; and as the first chef at 71 Clinton Fresh Food on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Chef Dufresne opened wd~50 (named for his initials and the street address) in April 2003. As a leading American proponent of introducing new techniques and sciences in the preparation and delivery of food, Chef Dufresne serves modern American cuisine that is renowned for its flavor, sophistication, and innovation.

Erik Battes / Perry St. / Chef de Cuisine

Erik Battes was appointed Chef de Cuisine at Jean-Georges Vongerichten's Perry St. at 24, thus becoming one of the youngest chefs at this level. While attending the Culinary Institute of America, Chef Battes spent his weekends taking the train into New York City to work in the kitchen at Jean Georges. Upon graduation, he had a brief stint at Water Grill in Los Angeles under Chef Michael Cimarusti before moving back to New York to work at Nougatine and eventually becoming part of the opening crew at Perry St. Chef Battes' cuisine can be described as simple, modern and explosive. His focused flavors and simple, clean presentation have received much attention and acclaim.

Edward Higgins / Insieme / Chef de Cuisine

Edward Higgins graduated from Boston's Cambridge School of Culinary Arts and began his career in Boston working as chef tournant at Biba Restaurant. He moved on to a chef saucier position at Aujourd'hui, a restaurant at the Four Seasons Hotel Boston, and as chef poissonier at New York's Craft Restaurant. After attending the BH Cooking School in Osaka, Japan, where he completed courses in *kaiseki ryori*, the traditional Japanese cuisine, Chef Higgins came back to New York to be part of the opening crew at Hearth. Following a stint as Chef de Cuisine at Tokyo's Four Seasons Hotel Marunouchi, Chef Higgins returned to New York once again to work with Marco Canora as Executive Chef at Insieme. Chef Higgins describes his cuisine as "respectful, subtle and uncomplicated."

Akinobu Suzuki / Sakagura / Executive Chef

Akinobu Suzuki began cooking at the age of 15 at Tokyo's Ogura restaurant. He worked at Ogura for ten years before taking up a position at Yamadaya in Tokyo where he had the opportunity to cook *fugu*, Japan's famous blowfish. Chef Suzuki spent two years in Vancouver before coming to New York to cook at Inagiku, Oikawa and Hatsuhana. In 2004, Chef Suzuki became the executive chef at Sakagura, where he specializes in cooking seasonal, authentic Japanese dishes and matching them to locally-brewed sakes from across Japan.

About House Foods America

House Foods America Corporation (HFAC) has produced tofu in the United States since 1983. The HFAC Tofu comes in Premium (non-organic) and Organic and is available in five firmness levels: extra soft, soft (silken), medium firm, firm and extra firm. In a recent tofu taste test conducted by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, House Foods Tofu was rated #1 and described as "creamy," "tender" and "fresh-tasting". For more information visit www.house-foods.com

About Gohan Society

The Gohan Society's mission is to foster an understanding and appreciation of Japan's culinary heritage in the United States through outreach to chefs, culinary arts professionals and all who admire and enjoy Japanese culture. We believe that by inspiring chefs, restaurateurs, journalists and food lovers both professional and amateur through educational initiatives, we will expand and enrich their repertoires, their artistry and their cultural understanding. www.gohansociety.org