



NEW ORLEANS, July 20 /PRNewswire/ --In support of Louisiana cuisine at a time when its seafood industry has been jeopardized by the Horizon oil spill, world-renowned chefs Thomas Keller, Daniel Boulud and Jerome Bocuse will team with New Orleans Chef Scott Boswell for a September 14 fundraiser at his French Quarter restaurant Stella! The event will benefit the Barrier Islands Restoration & Development Society (B.I.R.D.S.) and the Bocuse d'Or USA Foundation.

It is the first meal the distinguished chefs will cook together.

"These leaders of America's culinary revolution are committed to preserving our food culture and traditions," said Chef Boswell. "Like me, they're frustrated about the repercussions of the oil gushing in the Gulf, so we will unite in the kitchen to raise funds for our wetlands and the next generation of culinary professionals."

The benefit will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 14, beginning at 7 p.m. with cocktails in the Ursuline Convent gardens, followed by dinner at Restaurant Stella! Tickets for the evening are \$2,000 per person, and may be obtained by calling 504-587-0091 (Extension 100) or e-mailing cbrannon@chefscottboswell.com.

New Orleans businessmen John Houghtaling and Franco Valobra organized the event to raise awareness of the region's cuisine and Louisiana's wetlands.

"We've gathered some of the best culinary artists in the world to highlight our cuisine and draw attention to our struggle," Houghtaling said. "The barrier islands are home to brown pelicans, the symbol of our state and the wildlife upon which many of our cultural traditions are based. B.I.R.D.S. is a critically important cause."

B.I.R.D.S. was formed by a group of concerned civic leaders and Plaquemines Parish President Billy Nungesser to establish, maintain and restore the precious barrier islands of Southeast Louisiana. These natural barriers, which have been disappearing over the last century, provide a first line of defense for the fragile marshes, estuaries, and animal habitats that permeate the landscape surrounding the lower portion of the Mississippi River as it empties into the Gulf of Mexico.

The **Bocuse d'Or USA Foundation** is a non-profit (501(c)(3)) culinary organization devoted to inspiring culinary excellence within young professionals and preserving the traditions and quality of classic cuisine in America. The Foundation is led by a Board of Directors comprised of Daniel Boulud, Thomas Keller and Jerome Bocuse. Under their direction, the Foundation aims to build a community of knowledgeable young American chefs who are confident in their career pursuits and who will be lifelong ambassadors of gastronomic excellence. The Foundation is dedicated to making the careers of serious young chefs more meaningful and successful by offering them educational scholarships, internships and access to a Culinary Council of established professionals. The Bocuse d'Or USA Foundation helps support the country's most promising young professionals who are interested in competing and representing the U.S. in the prestigious Bocuse d'Or competition held in Lyon, France every two years.