

**AUBERGE DU SOLEIL CELEBRATES 25 YEARS AS NAPA VALLEY'S LANDMARK
RESTAURANT**

*New Executive Chef Robert Curry Honors The Wine Country Vision
Of Founder Claude Rouas*

RUTHERFORD, CALIF. (April 6, 2006) – Of the legions of Auberge du Soleil's fans, few outside of California may be aware that the acclaimed "inn of the sun" actually began as a restaurant from renowned restaurateur Claude Rouas. This spring, the restaurant that added wine country cuisine to the culinary lexicon celebrates 25 years as Napa Valley's first great dining destination and one of the most revered establishments in North America.

Rouas, a successful San Francisco restaurateur, opened the Restaurant at Auberge du Soleil in Napa Valley in 1981, causing a sensation among his customers, who questioned a location so far from the city. At the time, Napa was farm country, undiscovered as a dining or travel destination, with barely 14 wineries open for tastings. Rouas was struck by the valley's similarity to Provence in his native France. Siting his elegantly rustic *maison* in a sun-drenched olive grove at the top of a hill, he ensured that the Auberge's exquisite cuisine would be matched with an equally ethereal setting.

The cuisine at the restaurant at Auberge du Soleil is the food of wine country elevated to its finest form. With a commitment to local, artisan ingredients and skillful preparation, the menu stays true to the vision set forth by Rouas and interpreted throughout the years by a series of acclaimed chefs who have held the top position – from Masa Kobayashi at the inception to new Executive Chef Robert Curry. Curry has taken the helm with the same mission as his predecessors – to create sublime meals to pair with wine in Napa's most beautiful setting.

No chef speaks the language of wine country better than Curry, a California native who trained under Alain Ducasse and Michel Rostang in France and Wolfgang Puck and Michel Richard in the U.S. Curry earned his Napa credentials during successful tenures at nearby Domaine Chandon and Wine Spectator Greystone Restaurant before joining the Auberge in the summer of 2005. His menu reflects his new and old-world sensibilities, with signature dishes such as *Pan-Seared Foie Gras With Poached Rhubarb, Baby Fennel And Red Wine Vanilla Jus; Poached Lobster, Avocado With Brioche And Orange Vanilla Vinaigrette; and Venison Tournedos With Sweet Potato Napoleon, Wild Mushrooms And Huckleberry Sauce.*

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Working in partnership with Curry to create the perfect pairing of food and wine is the Head Sommelier Kris Margerum. One of longest-standing employees at the Auberge, Margerum has cultivated his palate during a more than 20-year tenure, forming close relationships with Napa's top winemakers and blind-tasting 100 wines each week to assemble the restaurant's wine list of 1,500 selections and 17,000-bottle cellar.

Guests enjoying the fruits of Curry's and Margerum's labor savor beautifully balanced cuisine in a setting that's every bit as unique. Originally designed by influential designer Michael Taylor, the restaurant and inn recently completed a significant renovation by Taylor's former protégée, Suzanne Tucker of the renowned firm Tucker & Marks. Rich earthy interiors feature exposed beams, warm wood furnishings and striking abstract paintings. Oversized windows open onto the terrace, home to embracing valley views, lingering sunsets and some of the most sought-after tables in the region.

The Restaurant at Auberge du Soleil is open daily for lunch and dinner. Lunch is served from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and dinner is served from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. For reservations, please call 800-348-5406. More information is available at www.aubergedusoleil.com.

Auberge du Soleil is the flagship property of **Auberge Resorts**, a collection of exceptional hotels, resorts and private clubs, each with a unique personality that assures a memorable guest experience. Among the distinctive properties are Esperanza, Calistoga Ranch and the Inn at Palmetto Bluff, with several others currently in development. While Auberge Resorts nurtures the individuality of each establishment, all are characterized by a set of communal elements: intimate, understated elegance; magnificent natural settings; inspired cuisine utilizing the very best regional ingredients; and gracious yet unobtrusive service. For more information about Auberge Resorts, please visit www.aubergeresorts.com.

Auberge du Soleil is also a member of **Relais & Châteaux**, the prestigious global hospitality association of intimate, elegant and independently owned hotels and acclaimed restaurants. Founded in 1954 in France, the association is comprised of 469 luxurious establishments in 51 countries.

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MEDIA CONTACT: Stacy Lewis / Vik Seshadri
Murphy O'Brien, Inc.
310-453-2539

stacy@murphyobrien.com

vik@murphyobrien.com