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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kouzina 2016: A Twist on the Classics

The National Hellenic Museum's premier food and wine event draws record crowd

CHICAGO - "Let go of worries. Share in the flavor of good things. Be together."

Those words, shared in a welcome letter from National Hellenic Museum Chairman John B. Calamos, Sr., encompassed the spirit of Kouzina 2016; Chicago's premiere chef-driven food festival.

Rena Lee, Director of Museum Experience, said the event was an "epic" success. "What could be better than a night of food, wine, and fun all for a good cause," said Lee. "We had record ticket sales and guests enjoyed themselves on every floor of the Museum."

Chef Peter Minaki, who served as honorary chef chair of Kouzina 2016, says this is an exciting time for Greek cuisine, with authentic Greek restaurants opening across the country and so many Greek pantry items like phyllo, feta, and Greek yogurt now available at most supermarkets.

"Now is the time to celebrate our heritage through our cuisine. It's as much a part of our culture and history as athletics, mathematics, medicine, music, philosophy, and astronomy," said Minaki.

From the delicious chef stations on the first floor to the hot toddies on the rooftop, the party filled nearly every corner of museum.

Guests began the evening on the first floor, where Chicago's leading chefs served generous portions of their delicious interpretations of Greek classics.

The dessert lounge featured tray after tray of sweets and pastries, including an almond orange rosemary cake by Athena Manolakos, pastry chef at Pan Hellenic Pastry Shop. Manolakos says she's passionate about preserving the traditional recipes and methods passed down from her parents, but wanted to add a modern twist for the occasion through the use of rosemary. "I love adding a touch of savory to my sweets," she said.

On the second floor, guests were invited to view the Museum's stunning geologic exhibition, "Aegean: Creation of an Archipelago" and taste Greek wines presented by Fantis Foods Inc. and Distinctive Imports. The evening also served as the official Chicago launch of Casa Potosi's Zeos Blu Mak Greek Lager, crafted to German standards using a Macedonian recipe.

On the third floor, wine workshops presented by 17-year sommelier Nicole Andersen and sponsored by Avli Estatorio, DNS Wine, Taxim, and Windy City Greek featured the wines of Santorini, Paros, and Crete.

Mother Nature blessed the Museum with beautiful weather for early November, allowing the building's rooftop to become a late night lounge featuring tastings of hot apple pie toddies made with Metaxa, a classic Greek liqueur. "Our guests said they loved being able to finish the evening with a drink on our rooftop, which has a spectacular view of the Willis Tower and Chicago skyline," said Lee.

A special thank you goes out to our Platinum and Gold sponsors: the Calamos family, Greek National Tourism Organization, the Metropoulos family, Grecian Delight Foods & the Parthenis families, the Koudounis family, and the Honorable and Mrs. John J. Stamos.

"Thank you to our chefs, sponsors, donors, vendors, volunteers, event committee, and staff for all their support and hard work," said Lee. "We couldn't do this without everyone's help."

The list of chefs included:

Louis Alexakis of Avli Estatorio
Jimmy Bannos of Heaven on Seven
Andres Barrera of City Winery
George Engel of City Gate Grille
Mario Kalamogias of Plateia Mediterranean Kitchen
Peter Kappos of Greek Islands
Tom Leo of Grecian Delight Foods
Peter Minaki of Kalofagas Supper Club (Toronto)
Jorgina Pereira of Sinha Elegant Brazilian Cuisine
Devon Quinn of Eden
Rick Spiros of Bento Box
David Schneider of Taxim

Desserts provided by Artopolis, Sweet Connection, Le Café, and Pan Hellenic Pastry Shop

Photo 1:

Kouzina 2016. Photo courtesy of Dimitri Eliopoulos/Elios Photography ©2016



Photo 2:
Chefs serve a twist on Greek cuisine at Kouzina 2016. Photo courtesy of Dimitri Eliopoulos/Elios
Photography ©2016



Photo 3:
Chef David Schneider of Taxim creates his food on-site at Kouzina 2016. Photo courtesy of Dimitri Eliopoulos/Elios Photography ©2016



Photo 4:
Chef George Engel from City Gate Grille serves his City Gate Moussaka. Photo courtesy of Dimitri Eliopoulos/Elios Photography ©2016



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Located in Chicago's Greektown, the sleek 40,000-square-foot National Hellenic Museum at 333. S. Halsted St. is both contemporary and timeless, connecting all generations—past, present and future—to the rich heritage of Greek history, culture, art and the Greek American experience. The National Hellenic Museum, previously known as the Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center, has been fulfilling this mission since 1983.

For more information, visit <http://www.nationalhellenicmuseum.org> or call 312-655-1234.

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