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30 MAINE BARTENDERS VYING FOR 15 COMPETITION SLOTS AT 2ND ANNUAL COLD RIVER BARTENDERS BASH ON FEBRUARY 28TH

Freeport, ME – The spirit of healthy competition is alive and well in Maine’s mixology world, according to partners at Maine Distilleries (www.mainedistilleries.com and www.facebook.com/mainedistilleries). Partners today announced their list of 30 Maine bartenders now competing in a two-month contest for the 15 coveted mixology slots at its upcoming “2nd Annual Cold River Bartenders Bash.” The Bash, to take place at Portland’s Ocean Gateway on February 28th from 5 – 8:30 p.m., will pit 15 well-known Maine bartenders against each other in a friendly “shaker-to-shaker” competition to create “The Ultimate Cold River Cocktail.”

The 30 participating restaurant and hotel bartenders are: James Ferguson from 50 Local; Josh Caron from 555; Zeus Hannah Suzette from Azure Café; Chris Pillsbury from Back Street Bistro; Zara Edwards of Caiola’s; Carly Lowell of Clementine Restaurant; Cindy Doxsey from District Grill; Megan Schroeter from East Ender; Benantonio Forgione from Eastland Park Hotel; John Myers from Fish Bones American Grill; Bob Murphy of Figa; Jeremiah Davis of Foreside Tavern; Evan Walsh from The Frog & Turtle; Pete Darby of Fuel; Barry McEvoy from Grace; Sarah Mason from The Great Lost Bear; Wade Apgar of Havana South; Kate Pelletier of Henry and Marty Restaurant; Anita Aker of The Hilton Garden Inn; Roxanne Dragon of Hugo’s; Bobby Hoyer from Gritty McDuff’s Freeport; the team of Nathaniel Meiklejohn and Jess Joseph from Local 188; Tobey Moulton from Nosh Kitchen Bar; Leah Chamberlin of Old Port Sea Grill; Tracy Rousseau of Solo Bistro; Spencer Albee from Sonny’s; the team of Ben Bragdon, Mike Barris and Simone Burdet from The Portland Regency; Josh Edlund from The Salt Exchange; the team of Scott Doherty and Guy Streitburger of Vignola; and, Steve Lovenguth of Walter’s.

The 30 restaurant bartenders now in the running for the Bartenders Bash’s 15 competition slots were selected by Maine Distilleries based on their ongoing, noteworthy support of Cold River spirits. The 30 mixologists have each created a unique, specialty Cold River cocktail, which is now being featured in each respective restaurant during the current two months leading up to the February 28th Bartenders Bash. The 15 bartenders with the most popular Cold River cocktails during that timeframe then will move on to compete at the February 28th Bash event itself, which will award 1st-, 2nd- and 3rd-place prizes to bartenders who deliver the ultimate cocktail made with Cold River spirits, to be decided on at the event by “People’s Choice” votes.

“We’ve been so fortunate that our Cold River gin and vodkas have taken off in so many states, and as far away as western Canada and London,” noted Bob Harkins, managing partner and director of sales and marketing at Maine Distilleries. “But particularly in Maine, we continue to see healthy growth. We know this is in no small measure due to the great amount of support Cold River spirits have received from so many Maine restaurants and bars. Our Bash party on February 28th is an obvious – and really fun – way for us to thank our supporters, and showcase the talents of some incredible bartenders in the process.”

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“Like all of our Cold River events since our 2005 launch, we figured our second Bartenders Bash event in Maine would be a big draw, but what’s been amazing has been how many restaurants and bartenders really wanted to be involved in the months leading up to the Bash,” added Chris Dowe, head distiller at Maine Distilleries. “We can’t say thanks often enough for this tremendous amount of interest and enthusiasm from so many Mainers.”

The Bash: Additional Details

Tickets (\$35) for the 2nd Annual Cold River Bartenders Bash are available for point-and-click purchase at <http://tinyurl.com/28rmueg> . (This is a 21+ event.)

Along with the event’s top-notch cocktails, guests will enjoy a gourmet menu created by Aurora Provisions, featuring upscale Maine potato-themed fare (to complement Cold River’s potato-based spirits). Among the many dishes, selections will include Maine Charcuterie and Pâté; Potato Latkes with Beet Relish and Cold River Vodka Crème Fraiche; Maine Shrimp Hushpuppies with Tabasco Remoulade; and Ham, Gruyere, Potato and Cornflake Balls with Spicy Mustard Sauce.

The Bash, to be emceed by Portland personality Joe Ricchio, will feature live classic blues and rock tunes throughout the evening by the Ken Grimsley Band.

The event is sponsored by *Maine* magazine, the Maine Restaurant Association, the Greater Portland Convention & Visitors Bureau, Maine Beverage Company, Bow Street Distributors, RSVP Discount Beverage and Better Bread Company.

The Bash’s sole beneficiary will be Share Our Strength Maine’s “Cooking Matters to Maine” nutrition education program, which features the talents of numerous Maine chefs and nutritionists, and benefits hundreds of families throughout Maine.

About Maine Distilleries, LLC (www.mainedistilleries.com)

Founded in 2005, Maine Distilleries, located in Freeport, Maine, is the brainchild of four talented Maine entrepreneurs: Donnie Thibodeau, who owns Green Thumb Farms in Fryeburg, ME; his brother, Lee Thibodeau, a neurosurgeon in Portland, ME; Bob Harkins, a former Sunday River ski executive from Paris, ME; and Chris Dowe, Head Distiller, from New Gloucester, ME. Known for their distinct nose and satin-smooth finish, the company’s gluten-free vodkas and gin are hand-crafted and batch-distilled in a copper pot still, using water from Maine’s Cold River Aquifer and farm-fresh Maine potatoes.

Maine Distilleries, which produces solely Cold River Vodka, Cold River Blueberry Vodka, and Cold River Gin, is the only “ground-to-glass” distillery in the nation, where the company controls every aspect of production from the planting of the potatoes to final bottling. The company’s award-winning Classic and Blueberry Vodkas currently are available at major markets, restaurants, and fine spirits retailers in 26 states, the District of Columbia, western Canada and London. Cold River Gin launched in August 2010 with a presence in seven northeast and southeast states, and the District of Columbia.

For more information, visit www.mainedistilleries.com or call (207) 865-4828.

To schedule an interview with Bob Harkins, Director of Sales and Marketing at Maine Distilleries, or Head Distiller Chris Dowe, contact Jen Beltz at (207) 699-5502 or jen@frontburnerpr.com.

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