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TASTE OF ATLANTA BARCRAFT COMPETITION OFFERS GUESTS CHANCE TO CHANNEL INNER MIXOLOGISTS

Festival Favorite Returns for 10th Year, Brings Spirited Fun at Cocktail Competition on October 22-23

ATLANTA (October 17, 2011) – Since the festival's inception 10 years ago, **Taste of Atlanta** has consistently brought together the city's top restaurants and most enthusiastic foodies for an event unlike any other. Again this year, the epicurean event showcases fan favorites and new experiences alike to inspire culinary creativity.

One of the most beloved festival features, the **Taste of Atlanta Barcraft Competition presented by Fernet-Branca** returns on October 22-23. The bar buffs are back, and guests can channel their inner mixologists as they catch the spirited action. Competition events are open to exclusively to VIP ticket holders, who can sample cocktails from Atlanta's best bartenders as they compete for the top spot at Taste of Atlanta.

After competing in a series of pre-festival qualifying events, finalists throw down onsite to become the **Taste of Atlanta Barcraft Champion**. The semi-final competition brings the thrills on **Saturday, October 22** in the VIP Tasting Tent from **12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.** each bartender creates and serves a Fernet-Branca cocktail to a panel of judges and festival VIPs. Judges and attendees rate the signature sips on name, originality, taste/balance and presentation. After sampling each drink, the parties combine scores to determine competition finalists.

The crafty competitors represent the rich resource of bartending talent in Atlanta, hailing from some of the city's best hotels, pubs, restaurants and craft cocktail bars. Arianne Fielder with **Ormsby's** takes tasters on a ride with her Train to Ferminus, Stuart White with **Miller Union** keeps it close with his signature Thick as Thieves, Tyler Nelson with **Leon's Full Service** opens up opportunity with The Mother of Invention and Eugene Brown with **East Andrews** brings the mystique with his Whodini Mangotini. A bartending cult favorite, **Fernet-Branca** serves as sponsor for the competition, and each semi-finalists' drink features the herbaceous, bitter Italian amaro.

Based on semi-final results, the top two bartenders battle it out on **Sunday, October 23** at **2:30 p.m.** at the Inside the Food Studio Tent. Each competitor receives a selection of spirits, modifiers and accents to create custom cocktails. As a sweet surprise, these secret ingredients remain a mystery to the mixology mavens until the final competition. Bartenders then craft three thirst-quenching cocktails to be scored by a panel of judges using the same criteria as outlined in the semi-finals. After assessing the perfectly balanced blends, judges announce the **2011 Taste of Atlanta Barcraft Champion**.

Many Barcraft competitors are members of the newly formed Atlanta chapter of the United States Bartenders' Guild. The USBG is a national and international network of bartenders and beverage professionals, from every aspect of the beverage industry, who come together to share their common interest: the craft of mixology.

"Almost four years ago, when Dale DeSena envisioned incorporating the Barcraft element into her very successful food festival, Atlanta's cocktail culture was just beginning to sprout," said USBG Atlanta Chapter President Brittany Chardin. "What was once only a handful of mixology-minded menus across the city is now a seasoned celebration of signature craft cocktails. A true visionary, Dale anticipated how Atlanta's bartending scene would develop. Now, she perfectly showcases the city's rich cocktail culture every year at Taste of Atlanta."

For information, or to join USBG Atlanta, visit www.USBG.org.

The **Taste of Atlanta Barcarft Competition** is open to VIP ticket holders only. VIP tickets, which include 15 taste coupons and access to the Wine+Beer+Cocktail Experience, can be purchased now for \$75. A limited number of VIP tickets are available, and the first 300 ticket holders each day receive a festival gift bag. Tickets are sold at locations throughout Atlanta, including Cook's Warehouse and Ticket Alternative outlets. Advance tickets must be purchased by midnight on October 22. For more information, visit www.tasteofatlanta.com/tix.php.

About Taste of Atlanta:

Taste of Atlanta is a two-day festival that attracts food lovers from throughout Atlanta, the Southeast and beyond to enjoy tastes from more than 80 restaurants from all over the Atlanta Metropolitan area. Guests can sample delicious dishes, sip robust wines and beers, be entertained by demos from local and celebrity chefs, and enjoy interactive sponsor experiences and family-friendly entertainment, while uncovering the incredible dining treasures the city has to offer. Join us Saturday and Sunday, October 22-23, in Technology Square. Stay connected to Taste of Atlanta 2011:

- Sign up for the Taste of Atlanta newsletter: www.tasteofatlanta.com
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