

## Brasserie 44

New York, NY – October 25, 2007 – **Brasserie 44**, the modern American eatery from restaurateur **John McDonald**, has opened at the newly renovated Royalton Hotel on **44 West 44<sup>th</sup> Street**. Executive Chef **Scott Ekstrom** has created a menu that will change with the seasons. Brasserie 44, along with **Bar 44**, also under the direction of McDonald, brings a renewed energy to this iconic hotel, sure to serve once again as a social center for New York's newsmakers and business elite.

"With such a dynamic history, I am excited to re-ignite the lobby, bar and restaurant with Bar 44 and Brasserie 44," says restaurateur John McDonald. "I hope to restore the energy and service that is expected in today's ever-changing market of design-driven hotels."

Morgans Hotel Group commissioned acclaimed design firm **Roman and Williams** to re-imagine Royalton, including the restaurant and bar spaces, which are open to the hotel's lobby. Interiors have been dramatically updated to create various moods throughout the expansive space. At the front of the hotel, Bar 44 offers bar and sunken lounge seating on either side of the lobby's famed runway. The interiors move from dark at the hotel's entrance (mahogany and rosewood woods, dark earth toned seating) to light at the restaurant (teak woods and pale buffalo skins and leathers). Brasserie 44 is an open and airy space, featuring woven rope arches in geometric patterns that rise over the banquettes. Overhead lighting is comprised of groupings of glass-blown globes in gradient hues from New York artist John Pomp, while the light-colored table settings are handmade from mid-century potteries maker Heath Ceramics.

Executive Chef Scott Ekstrom has created a modern American menu, featuring dishes like *slow poached farmhouse egg* with parmesan cream, crisp potatoes, pancetta, and wild dandelions; *braised lamb shank*, with salsify, baby fennel, black olives, and tangerine; and *white bean stew*, with duck three ways (confit, smoked, and foie) and herbed bread crumbs. The restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner and provides in-room dining options for hotel guests.

Brasserie 44 houses a wine cellar with a collection of some 3,000 bottles carefully selected to perfectly complement each meal. A sophisticated seasonal cocktail menu is available in both Brasserie 44 and Bar 44, with favorites including the *Honey Sling*, Tanqueray Rangpur Gin, honey and muddled lime; the *Le Poire*, Grey Goose le Poire with a float of Ayala Champagne and lemon; and the *Claremont*, Crown Royal with muddled oranges, cherries, and Angostura bitters. Bar 44 offers lounge and pre-fix theatre food menus for guests.

Restaurateur **John McDonald** has built a collection of design-driven and fashionable restaurants throughout Manhattan. In 1993, McDonald opened the now iconic **MercBar** located in the heart of SoHo. Since then, he has opened the "power-dining" **Lever House Restaurant**, the stylish fish and sushi restaurant **Lure Fishbar**, and his most recent project, a modern Chinese restaurant named **Chinatown Brasserie**, on Lafayette Street. McDonald publishes the award-winning magazine *CITY*, and outside of Manhattan, he owns a second MercBar location in Phoenix and publishes *Desert Living*, a luxury regional magazine in Arizona.

Executive Chef **Scott Ekstrom** graduated from The Restaurant School of Philadelphia and has worked under the tutelage of an impressive roster of chefs. His professional training began at The Fountain Restaurant at The Four Seasons Philadelphia, where he learned the classical French cuisine of Chef Jean-Marie Lacroix. In 1997, Chef Georges Perrier, of Le Bec Fin and Brasserie Perrier, schooled Ekstrom in technical French cooking, and in 1999, he moved to New York City to work under world renowned Chef Daniel Boulud at **Daniel**, which during his tenure received four stars. In the spring of 2003, Ekstrom joined **Oceana** as Sous Chef and was later promoted to Chef de Cuisine. Here he was guided by chef-phenom Cornelius Gallagher, and before leaving the restaurant to serve as Executive Chef of Brasserie 44, Oceana received three stars from *The New York Times* and four stars from the *New York Post*.

**Brasserie 44** is located at 44 West 44<sup>th</sup> Street in New York City. For reservations call 212-944-8844. Brasserie 44 seats 110 guests and is open for breakfast Monday-Friday from 7am – 11am and for brunch Saturday and Sunday from 8am – 3pm. Lunch is served Monday-Friday 11:30am – 3pm. Dinner is available Sunday-Thursday 5:30pm – 11pm and Friday and Saturday 5:30pm – 12am. Bar 44 is open seven days a week from 11:30am – 2am with food service until 11pm. Brasserie 44 is available for private events.

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