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BLU UPS THE ANTE FOR NORTHERN CHELSEA DINING SCENE

Roberto Bellissimo Brings Creative Culinary Vision to Hotel Indigo

NEW YORK, November 9, 2009 – At the nexus of the city's art, fashion and flower districts, sits the newly opened ***blu restaurant and bar*** inside New York's first Hotel Indigo. **Chef Roberto Bellissimo** is bringing sophisticated Italian-influenced contemporary American cuisine to an emerging area with few existing upscale dining options.

Located off the hotel lobby at 127 West 28th St., between 6th and 7th Ave, the 70-seat restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner seven days a week. Chef Bellissimo previously worked at Le Cirque and Della Rovere in New York City and at top hotels and restaurants in Milan, Amsterdam and Toronto, including the Fairmont Royal York.

"We have created a warm and inviting environment that will draw New Yorkers and hotel guests looking for creative yet approachable upscale cuisine," said Morris Moinian, president of Fortuna Realty Group and owner of *blu* and the new Hotel Indigo NYC Chelsea. "Just like in our hotel operation, *blu* offers a new, exciting and modern vision so we look forward to great things from Chef Bellissimo and his staff."

The menu plays extensively on the theme of a contemporary American bistro with an Italian influence, emphasizing local-sourcing. Featured on the lunch/dinner menu are fresh seafood dishes such as a black sea bass with beluga lentils, bacon and kohlrabi; and roasted wild salmon with a fava bean puree, roasted hen of wood mushrooms, and preserved lemon vinaigrette. Meats feature prominently as well, with special care given to a dry-aged (Diamond Ranch) angus rib eye and panko pork chop. Also of note are the chef's house-made pastas, such as a sheep-milk ricotta gnocchi and egg pappardelle.

“Having garnered experience in kitchens around the world I have had the benefit of working with fresh ingredients from the source. My goal will be to reinvent *blu*’s menu with the season so that diners will get the freshest, sustainable products we have at our disposal,” said Bellissimo.

Bellissimo has a passion for fresh and bracing seafood flavors, leading him to create an exceptional raw bar, inspired by his time working in the old Fulton Fish Market. Fresh oysters and sashimi are day-boat fresh and feature the best available selections.

Driven by freshness and quality, the chef has brought on board the finest pastry chef he knows, his wife Monica Bellissimo. The two worked together at Le Cirque and she now runs a dessert and pastry business which will supply the inventive and sumptuous desserts for *blu*. Selections include lemon meringue cake with Limoncello ice cream, brown butter cheesecake with roasted caramel pears and pear sorbet, and warm chocolate Nutella cake with milk chocolate ice cream. Mrs. Bellissimo will prepare fresh breads and pastries for the restaurant’s breakfast menu, which also includes homemade coconut granola, mascarpone vanilla Greek yogurt, omelets and quiche.

Wine drinkers will be impressed with a concise and targeted list of well-priced – \$30-\$125 a bottle – choices specially chosen from smaller producers from Italy, France, Spain and the United States. Cocktail drinkers will also enjoy a rotating list of house specialties, such as the “*blu* Fizz,” “Mochatini,” and “Fiddlesticks Martini.”

The warm and stylish space features an inviting and clubby environment, with home-like touches. In tribute to the fashion and art of the neighborhood, one wall is given over to colorful photographs by Jonas Mekas. Italian chandeliers and mirrors along one wall evoke an intimate, stylish mood.

Herman Allenson, former assistant food and beverage director of the Soho House, is the director of operations for *blu*, bringing with him more than fifteen years of professional experience in the restaurant industry.

“*blu* is a wonderful addition to a neighborhood that is in need of quality, upscale cuisine,” said Allenson. “Along with our rooftop venue, Glass Bar, *blu* is poised to be a hot destination for locals and visitors alike.”

The Hotel Indigo New York City Chelsea features 122 guest rooms including two penthouse suites, with custom-designed furniture imported from Italy, oversized beds, plush bedding, hardwood-style flooring for a fresh residential feel, and spa-inspired showers with Aveda products. Each guest room includes a 32-inch high-definition flat screen TV with 150 channels, iHome docking station and fashion-inspired wall mural. Additionally, the hotel provides guests complimentary Wi-Fi throughout the hotel and access to the 24-hour business center, meeting space and 24-hour fitness studio. The hotel also features a pet-friendly policy.

Hotel Indigo is owned and managed by Fortuna Realty, LLC, under a license agreement with a company in the InterContinental Hotels Group. Fortuna Group's portfolio includes several hotels, residential apartment buildings, office buildings and development properties.

For more information on Hotel Indigo or *blu* please visit www.indigochelsea.com.

blu restaurant and bar
Hotel Indigo NYC Chelsea
127 West 28th Street (bet. 6th and 7th)
646.484-4330

Hours of operation:

Breakfast: Monday - Friday - 6:30 – 11am
Saturday/Sunday - 7 - 11am
Lunch: Monday - Sunday – 11am – 5pm
Dinner: Monday - Saturday - 5:30 – 11pm
Sunday - 5:30 - 10pm

About Hotel Indigo

Meeting the desires of today's business and leisure traveler, Hotel Indigo is an upscale boutique brand that delivers a refreshing and inviting guest experience that is truly reflective of the local community. There are currently 32 Hotel Indigo properties open worldwide and more than 60 hotels under development, either in the pipeline or in final negotiation. For more information on Hotel Indigo, or to make reservations, please visit www.indigochelsea.com.

Hotel Indigo participates in IHG's guest loyalty program, Priority Club® Rewards. With 44 million members worldwide, Priority Club Rewards is the industry's first and largest guest loyalty program. Guests can enroll for free by logging on at priorityclub.com, by calling 1-888-211-9874 or by inquiring at the front desk of this hotel or any of IHG's more than 4,300 hotels worldwide.

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