

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Fourth-Annual *Food as Art at Bell Harbor* Spotlights Seattle's Top African-American Chefs *Benefit for Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas is April 7***

SEATTLE – The Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas ([www.cdforum.org](http://www.cdforum.org)) will host the fourth-annual, Food as Art at Bell Harbor International Conference Center on April 7.

The 6 p.m. event, which is the Central District Forum's signature fundraiser features cuisine by Seattle's leading African-American chefs and restaurateurs.

"Food as Art at Bell Harbor is a fun and entertaining way to support our organization," says Stephanie Ellis-Smith, Founder and Executive Director of the Central District Forum, an award-winning organization that presents and produces African-American cultural programs. Bell Harbor International Conference Center, the signature sponsor of the evening, is located at 2211 Alaskan Way.

Last year, nearly 400 people mixed and mingled, savoring exquisite culinary creations and raising more than \$40,000. This year's goal is \$55,000. Early ticket sales have been so brisk that organizers anticipate the event will sell out. Tickets, which cost \$100 to \$150, are available at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/8668>. Tickets will not be sold at the door.

Food as Art at Bell Harbor proceeds go directly toward expanding the Central District Forum's capacity to offer Seattle-area audiences inspirational theater, music performances, readings, lectures and discussions about the black experience in America.

The Central District Forum, which presents and produces African-American cultural programs that encourage thought and debate for the greater Seattle area has won the Evergreen Award for Nonprofit Leadership, the Mayor's Art Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Community, Microsoft's Community Hero Award and the Pride Foundation's Ted Lord Award.

"Given the overwhelming response to last year's event, we are very pleased to return to Bell Harbor this year," says Ellis-Smith, "Food as Art at Bell Harbor offers a unique opportunity to meet some of the city's best African-American chefs, taste a delectable and varied array of exquisite cuisine and support the Central District Forum's mission. The food is outstanding, the crowd is diverse, and the vibe is like being at a very relaxing dinner party with old friends."

This year, Food as Art at Bell Harbor has expanded to nearly 20 chefs and restaurateurs, with eight chefs appearing for the first time.

Among the newcomers is Debbie Hatfield, who launched her catering business, Absolutely Cookin' in 2005. She learned about the benefit two years ago when she was studying culinary at the Art Institute of Seattle. By serving as a volunteer culinary assistant, Debbie was inspired by the number of successful entrepreneurs and is excited to return as a chef.

"Being new and just starting out on my own, I consider it a blessing to be involved. It's a big deal for me because it could help me launch my business in the way I've dreamed," Hatfield says. "Volunteering and seeing people out there doing their own thing, running their own businesses, I thought, 'I want to do this; I want to have my own table.' And now I do. It's a huge opportunity. I've got a chance so I'm coming with it."

Other newcomers this year include Allan Wambaa of Bell Harbor International Conference Center, Connie Palmore of Dandelion, Mulugeta Abate of Pan Africa Market, Kimberley Davis of Sur La Table, Patric Gabre-Kidan of Tavolata, Graça Ribeiro of Tempero do Brasil and Waid Sainvil of Waid's Haitian Cuisine.

Returning favorites include Daisley Gordon of Campagne, Richard Dwyer of Casuelita's and Makini Howell of Hillside Quickies Café. All participants are listed below.

The evening's festivities will begin with elaborate tasting stations offering a diversity of fine cuisine including vegetable risotto, lamb dolmas and seared scallop with frisee salad from Andaluca; sauteed shrimp and chorizo with an avocado cream sauce, served with fried flour and corn tortilla chips from St. Cloud's; and chicken adobo w/grilled pineapple salsa and coconut black beans from Villa Victoria Catering. Villa Victoria is one of the several stations representing the melding of influences found throughout the African-American diaspora.

A fascinating group of people will speak during the event. Dr. Nikhil P. Singh, Walker Family Professor of History at the University of Washington; Timeca Briggs, a rising playwright and actress; and Donna Moodie, Central District Forum's newly elected board president and owner of marjorie will join Executive Director Ellis-Smith. The program also includes a silent auction featuring works from local artists Barbara Earl Thomas, Annie Lee and Rod Long; in-home dinners from Michael's Cucina and Chef Amadeus; a Mayflower Hotel weekend getaway; and a timepiece from TuTu Time. The classic jazz duo, Ray Baldwin's Version of Cool, which regularly plays at Osteria La Spiga will provide live music.

Food as Art at Bell Harbor corporate sponsors are Casey Family Programs, Convergent Zone, K&L Gates, Microsoft, Nordstrom, Safeco Insurance, Saint Clair Solutions and Verizon.

General information about the benefit is available online at [www.foodasart.org](http://www.foodasart.org) or by calling 206-323-4032.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** High-resolution images of last year's event and interviews with participating chefs and Stephanie Ellis-Smith are available upon request.

### **Food as Art at Bell Harbor 2007 Chef and Restaurateur Participants:**

[Absolutely Cookin'](#), Debbie Hatfield  
[Andaluca](#), Wayne Johnson  
[Bell Harbor Conference Center](#), Allan Wambaa  
[Campagne/Cafe Campagne](#), Daisley Gordon  
[Casuelita's](#), Richard Dwyer  
[Dandelion](#), Connie Palmore  
[Hillside Quickies Café](#), Makini Howell  
[The Kingfish Café](#), Laurie & Leslie Coaston and Kenyetta Carter  
[marjorie](#), Donna Moodie  
[Osteria La Spiga](#), Sabrina Tinsley  
[Pan Africa Market](#), Mulugeta Abate

[Sessions with Chef Amadeus](#), Chef Amadeus  
[St. Cloud's](#), Michael King  
[Sur La Table](#), Kimberley Davis  
[Tavolata](#), Patrick Gabre-Kidan  
[Tempero do Brasil](#), Graça Ribeiro  
[That Brown Girl Catering](#), Kristi Brown-Wokoma  
[Villa Victoria Catering](#), Naomi Smith  
[Waid's Haitian Cuisine](#), Waid Sainvil  
[The Wellington](#), Cynthia Hobbs

### **ABOUT CENTRAL DISTRICT FORUM FOR ARTS & IDEAS**

Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas presents and produces African-American cultural programs that encourage thought and debate for the greater Seattle area with the goal of inspiring new thoughts and challenging assumptions about African-American Culture. CD Forum's programs are diverse and culturally rich, using literature, theater, music, and scholarship, among other disciplines, to break down stereotypes and encourage us to broaden our view of African-American culture.

To learn more, visit [www.cdforum.org](http://www.cdforum.org).

### **ABOUT BELL HARBOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER**

Bell Harbor International Conference Center is Seattle's premier waterfront conference venue, with 18 meeting rooms totaling 98,387 square feet and capacity for up to 6,000 guests. Bell Harbor is equipped with state-of-the art technology and amenities, and provides the finest service and cuisine. The Port of Seattle owns Bell Harbor International Conference Center, which Seattle-based Columbia Hospitality manages and operates.

To learn more, visit [www.bellharbor.com](http://www.bellharbor.com).