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BIZZFIZZ

By Rene Martel

Wellness the theme at Sofitel summit

SINCE President Gloria Arroyo has declared October as "Wellness Month" it was quite fitting that the Singapore-based publishing company Wellness Media should gather together business leaders, innovative entrepreneurs and experienced hoteliers for the SpaAsia Wellness Summit 2007 (October 3 to 5) at Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila.

Over 300 delegates and participants ranging from CEOs, directors, spa proprietors, journalists, healers, doctors, therapists and trainers to owners, financiers, investors, developers and development teams who have made invaluable contribution to the Asia Pacific spa industry are assembled at the Sofitel in what is a veritable wellness fest.

Industry experts and noted speakers will present keynote addresses, dissect case studies, unravel research findings and helm various discussion panels. Everything is geared towards reaching "an unspoken agreement" on pertinent issues affecting the future of the spa and wellness industry at large which the fastest growing sector in the Asia-Pacific tourism industry.

And with a captive audience of health buffs under its roof, the French owned Sofitel is doing its own bit for the cause by inviting everyone to experience its joie de vivre through healthy living and well-being with the introduction of Cuisine Vitale.

According to Sofitel General Manager Bernd Schneider good health and longevity are life's rewards when one eats right, exercises and leads a healthy lifestyle.

He adds: "As the Philippines celebrates health and wellness month, Sofitel Philippine Plaza, is at the forefront of this campaign not only by being the venue of the Spa Asia Wellness Summit 2007 but also by offering healthy dishes at its restaurants which are delicious and nourishing because of the enhanced flavors achieved by the use of natural and organic ingredients.

The first restaurant for the rollout of Cuisine Vitale is Spiral, the Sofitel's renowned versatile interactive dining destination. Since it opened last year, it has been known for its bountiful and lavish spread, with over 300 dishes each meal period. The Cuisine Vitale caters to everybody at all age groups even children, not only for



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those who are diet-conscious.

The hotel's culinary team, led by Executive Chef Christian Werdenberg, has made intensive research about Cuisine Vitale and meticulously put together a whole range of different dishes that are low calorie (less than 40 calories per serving) cholesterol free (less than 2 mg of cholesterol per serving and 2 grams or less of saturated fat per serving), low cholesterol (20 mg or less of cholesterol per serving and 2 grams or less of saturated fat per serving).

But back to the Wellness Summit where among the invited speakers are Susan Harms-worth, founder and CEO of ESPA; Professor Mary Tabacchi from Cornell Hotel School; Bryan Durocher, founder of Durocher Enterprises, Professor Marc Cohen, founding professor of Complementary Medicine at RMIT University; Grace Gawler, internationally renowned holistic wellness practitioner, author and herbalist; Wellness guru Raymond Nadeau who has worked with Celine Dion and Jennifer Lopez; and Dr. Noah McKay, an American holistic wellness practitioner who will be launching a book at the summit entitled, Wellness At Warp Speed.

Each year the Wellness Summit—where the SpaAsia Crystal awards which single out excellence in various categories of the spa industry in Asia-Pacific (The Farm at San Benito in Lipa City, Batangas, is a previous awardee) is a highlight—grows in scope and diligently takes into account the escalating concerns, interests and feedback from delegates and industry stakeholders. In 2007, "Well-ness" and "Going Green" have been identified as global trends that demand to be heard this time around.

During the summit the Philippine Department of Tourism will also launch a campaign on "Islands of Wellness" and will host post tours for the delegates and media in Cebu, Palawan, Bohol, Boracay and Davao.◆

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