



**For Immediate Release**

**For More Information Contact:**

Ellen Ruane, General Manager  
The Founders Inn and Spa  
(757)366-5763  
[eruane@BenchmarkManagement.com](mailto:eruane@BenchmarkManagement.com)

Tony Loos, Director of Food and Beverage  
(757) 366-5756  
[aloos@benchmarkmanagement.com](mailto:aloos@benchmarkmanagement.com)

**New Swan Terrace Executive Chef Joe Elliott  
Dishes it Out  
Awarded Most Outstanding Dish at  
2007 March of Dimes Signature Chef Event**

Virginia Beach, Va. (October 19, 2007) –Executive Chef Joe Elliott joined the staff of Swan Terrace at The Founders Inn and Spa this past summer, and has already shared both his talent and charitable heart with the Hampton Roads culinary community. His dish was announced winner of the “Most Outstanding Dish” award as voted by a select panel of local food critics, on Sunday, October 14, 2007, at the “Dining With the Stars” March of Dimes Signature Chefs Auction at The Founders Inn and Spa.

And the winning dish? Pan-Seared Day Scallops with Cauliflower Puree and Lobster Emulsion accompanied by Braised Veal Cheeks with Creamy Polenta, Chive Oil and Port Wine. The judging took place “blind,” meaning that the judges did not know which chef had created which meal, thereby assuring objectivity. With a dish as amazing as this, it is no wonder that Chef Joe didn’t need to claim the “home court advantage.”

Chef Joe Elliott responded genuinely, “I was honored to have my dish chosen as the most outstanding and even more honored to have been a part of such an important evening. The skill and professionalism of the chefs was amazing.” Elliott adds, “Their time and dedication to this cause is equally impressive. I am proud to be a part of this generous group.”

Elliott graduated in 1995 from the Pennsylvania Institute of Culinary Arts. Since then he’s gained extensive experience in several AAA, Four and Five Diamond properties.

Chef Elliott was named Ohio Chef of the Year in 2004 after winning the “Iron Chef” competition. His participation in benefit chef’s dinners and involvement in television cooking demonstrations, show his willingness to share his talent.

Area chefs cooked their hearts out for this benefit and impressed the palates of hundreds of people, at the black tie optional affair. In all, twenty five of Hampton Roads’ finest toque-topped chefs prepared portions of their favorite meals for tasting by the judges and guests. Both a silent and live auction took place, as Peter Decker, III navigated as the master of ceremonies. The event was sponsored by The Founders Inn and Spa, SYSCO of Hampton Roads, FOX43, and Hampton Roads Magazine.

Cheryl Lee, Executive Director of the Greater Hampton Roads Division of the March of Dimes, lead the event planning and execution with enthusiasm and focus. She, as well as all participants and guests at the event, worked to assure ongoing funding of the organization’s mission: to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality carried out through research, community services, education and advocacy to save babies' lives.

MORE

#### **About The Founders Inn and Spa**

Boasting old-world charm and the finest southern hospitality, The Founders Inn and Spa provides the appeal and warmth of a country inn, accented by beautiful antiques and historic artifacts, with a new \$5 million full-service resort spa, grand scale pool featuring a circular slide and interactive fountains, luxurious amenities and award-winning cuisine. The Inn's 240 guestrooms and suites include High Speed Internet access, generous workspace and views of 26 landscaped acres. Select rooms include gas fireplaces, and views of the lake and formal gardens. The Founders Inn and Spa is located at 5641 Indian River Road in Virginia Beach near exit 286B off Interstate 64 East. For reservations and additional information, please call 800-926-4466 or visit [www.foundersinn.com](http://www.foundersinn.com).

Benchmark Hospitality manages The Founders Inn and Spa, as well as three other Virginia properties: Lansdowne Resort near Leesburg, a suburb of Washington, D.C.; and Virginia Crossings Resort in Richmond.

Benchmark Hospitality International, an independent hospitality management company based in The Woodlands (Houston), Texas, operates resorts, conference centers, hotels and condominium resorts both domestically and internationally. For locations of Benchmark Hospitality properties and for additional information, visit Benchmark's Website at [www.benchmarkhospitality.com](http://www.benchmarkhospitality.com).

For general information contact:

Jean Mackay Vinson

(757) 366-5711

[jvinson@benchmarkmanagement.com](mailto:jvinson@benchmarkmanagement.com)

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