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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **It's Time for Dinner!**

### **Criollo Restaurant & Lounge Brings Contemporary Louisiana Fare to Dinner in New Orleans French Quarter**

*New Orleans, LA (July 24, 2012)* – Criollo Restaurant & Lounge, located in the heart of the French Quarter, makes its dinner debut!

Already extremely popular with diners for lunch and breakfast, the launching of the dinner menu at Criollo has been the most anticipated culinary event of the year.

The French Quarter restaurant offers a dinner menu highlighting blended flavors and cultures of New Orleans. Led by Chef de Cuisine Joseph Maynard and Executive Chef Randolph Buck, Criollo's dishes are infused with traditional Creole flavors – French, Spanish, Italian, Caribbean and African. Along with the addition of new spices, Criollo creates dishes in the style it calls Louisiana Fusion.

"We are honored and excited to be offering this extraordinary dining experience," says Chef Maynard. "It's unique, fresh and satisfying. Welcome everyone – come join us for dinner at Criollo."

Criollo is the Spanish word for "Creole." As the name chosen for the new restaurant, it represents the amalgam of cultures reflected in our cooking and the unique tastes that infuse Louisiana cuisine.

#### **Cuisine**

Fashioned with Louisiana and the Gulf South region's abundant bounty of fresh, homegrown products from land and sea chosen with meticulous care by Criollo's expert chefs, the ingredient-driven, seasonal menu offers creative dishes inspired by culinary traditions with appreciation for contemporary tastes.

"Each dish at Criollo is inspired by ingredients we find in our own backyard," says Maynard. "We are blessed to have an incredible assortment of locally grown produce, spices and fresh Gulf seafood right at our fingertips. It's a thrill to have this delicious palette of local ingredients to choose from for our menus. We love challenging ourselves to reinvent traditional recipes, creating unexpected dishes to surprise and delight our guests."

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Signature items include a Chilled Gulf Shrimp, Blue Crab and Avocado appetizer. The dish includes jumbo lump crab layered with fresh diced avocado and local tomato, finished with a spicy tomato coulis. The Pan Roasted Swordfish entrée showcases a fresh eye cut swordfish filet served over a bold saffron and asparagus risotto. The dish is beautifully finished with a coconut crustacean sauce. Guests may end their meal with a decadent Warm Chocolate Savarin: a warm chocolate génoise filled with stone ground chocolate ganache, accompanied by caramelized Bing cherries and vanilla gelato.

In addition to fine cuisine, Criollo Restaurant & Lounge offers a grand assortment of wines and spirits, including a signature Criollo Cocktail.

### **The Chef**

Chef de Cuisine Joseph Maynard comes to Criollo Restaurant & Lounge with a diverse background of cooking experience. A Miami native and former New Orleans resident, Maynard began cooking at a young age and earned his culinary degree from the Southeast Institute of Culinary Arts in St. Augustine, Florida. Chef Maynard worked his way up in the culinary industry from an executive sous chef at several different restaurants including the Delano Hotel and Miami, to the executive chef at Asia de Cuba in the Mondrian Hotel, one of Miami's newest luxury hotels.

Choosing flavorful ingredients from a host of local suppliers for Criollo's imaginative menu is one of Chef Joe's most rewarding tasks.

### **Style**

The architectural design of Criollo Restaurant & Lounge inspires a feeling of easygoing, relaxed, New Orleans-style elegance. French limestone floors, and rich dark wood are set within a palette of warm gold, deep purple and muted blue. Sparkling circular glass chandeliers and coffered ceiling designs with customized crown molding open up the room. Smaller booths and table seatings are trendy, comfortable settings for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The open kitchen, always bustling with activity, creates anticipation as everyone watches the chefs create culinary masterpieces. Diners looking for a more intimate experience may be seated in one of two private dining spaces.

Criollo Restaurant & Lounge is now open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Located next to the famous Carousel Bar & Lounge, the restaurant is inside the Hotel Monteleone. For more information and regular updates about Criollo Restaurant & Lounge, please visit [www.criollonola.com](http://www.criollonola.com).

*Established in 2012, Criollo Restaurant & Lounge combines the traditional Creole flavors of French, Spanish, Italian, and African influences with new spices to create a Contemporary Louisiana cuisine. The restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner and is located in the heart of the New Orleans French Quarter inside the historic Hotel Monteleone. For more information, please visit [www.criollonola.com](http://www.criollonola.com).*