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GRAND RAPIDS LANDS CHEF PAUL BERGLUND, JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION BEST CHEF AWARDEE. MENU TO BE OFFERED IN EARLY 2021.

December 29, 2020 (Grand Rapids, MI)- Paul Berglund, former executive chef at The Bachelor Farmer in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and winner of the James Beard Foundation Best Chef Award Midwest in 2016, has relocated to Grand Rapids, Michigan. Mr. Berglund will debut as the executive chef of Mertens Prime in downtown Grand Rapids in early 2021.

As the only James Beard Best Chef awardee in the State of Michigan, Mr. Berglund is excited to bring his cooking to what-is-already a vibrant restaurant scene in Grand Rapids. Mr. Berglund reflected on his hopes for his Grand Rapids arrival:

"I was drawn to Grand Rapids in part by its dynamic and growing food and beverage community, which has made me feel welcomed here. I am excited to have the opportunity to contribute to the momentum the local area has generated in recent years."

Grand Rapids Mayor, Rosalynn Bliss, spoke to the enthusiasm created by Paul's addition to the Grand Rapids restaurant landscape:

"The stand-out food and beverage produced by our restaurants, breweries and distilleries in Grand Rapids has generated incredible benefits for our city. Adding a nationally-recognized chef of Paul Berglund's caliber to our already-vibrant restaurant community is a huge win for Grand Rapids. We welcome Paul with open arms and look forward to attracting visitors to Grand Rapids to explore his cooking among the many outstanding restaurants throughout our city."

Doug Small, the CEO of destination marketing organization Experience Grand Rapids, also shared his enthusiasm for the arrival of Mr. Berglund:

"This is great news for Grand Rapids as we put the challenges of 2020 behind us and head into the New Year. We welcome Paul to our city and look forward to working together to bring more diners throughout the State and beyond back to the world-class restaurant and beverage offerings of downtown Grand Rapids."

Mr. Berglund built his career by focusing on European cuisine. His cooking skills were established at the Oliveto Café and Restaurant in Oakland, California where he rose to the Chef de Cuisine role and solidified the Italian-focused establishment as a stalwart in the East Bay. After moving to Minneapolis, Mr. Berglund got his first opportunity to build his own menu at

The Bachelor Farmer and developed a Northern European offering that opened to immediate success in 2011. Food critics soon took notice and a national spotlight was shone on the restaurant with it being named one of the Top 10 Best New Restaurants in the U.S. by Bon Appetit magazine and then Mr. Berglund's nominations and subsequent award as Best Chef Midwest by the James Beard Foundation in 2016. This achievement is difficult to attain; Michigan was last conferred with a James Beard Best Chef Award in 1994, and prior to that in 1984.

Mr. Berglund left The Bachelor Farmer in 2017 and soon moved to Rochester, MN to be closer to his wife Tia Chakraborty, who at the time was pursuing a neurology residency at the Mayo Clinic. She was recently appointed as a neurointensivist at Spectrum Health, which brought the couple to Grand Rapids.

Mr. Berglund has begun development of his menu at Mertens Prime and will bring his flavors and precision to the French-focused cuisine that Mertens has become known for since its opening in 2017. Anthony Tangorra, managing member and restaurant director at Mertens Hospitality, commented,

"We're excited to have Paul share his culinary gifts with the city of Grand Rapids. He is developing a menu that is designed to have him bring out his own talent and creativity within the expansive world of French cuisine and premium steaks and chops that is Mertens Prime. We're pleased to be the platform for Paul's next step in his culinary journey."

Given the current indoor dining prohibition in Michigan, Mr. Berglund plans to use this time to perfect his dishes as he prepares for his debut. Mertens Prime is ending take-out during Paul's menu development phase and will announce the new menu when he completes the process. In addition, availability of future reservations at Mertens Prime has been temporarily halted. The restaurant will announce when reservations will be available for booking in the near future. Assuming regulatory restrictions have been lifted, the restaurant expects to debut Mr. Berglund's menu in January.

Mr. Berglund will also have responsibility for the other venues at Mertens including Mertens Rooftop, Café Mertens and 9th St. Steaks. Unlike Mertens Prime, Café Mertens and 9th St Steaks will continue to offer their takeout and delivery services under their current menus. Mertens Rooftop will debut a new menu under Mr. Berglund's leadership late next Spring.

About Mertens Hospitality

Mertens Hospitality is based in Grand Rapids, Michigan. It owns and operates fine-dining venue Mertens Prime, French street food venue Café Mertens, and a top-floor outdoor lounge called Mertens Rooftop; all located at what was once an early 20th century Grand Rapids hotel, New Hotel Mertens, at 35 Oakes Street SW. The group also operates pop-up restaurant 9th Street Steaks.

For more information about Mertens Hospitality, please visit mertensgr.com, or email us at info@mertenshospitality.com.

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