Press release Wednesday 18 November 2015

Four new Academy Chair appointments to The Diners Club® World’s 50 Best Restaurants Academy

The World’s 50 Best Restaurants is delighted to announce the appointment of four new Academy Chairs to head up the voting panels for their regions across the globe.

- Michalene Busico is the new Academy Chair for the region of West USA and West Canada
- Nicolas Chatenier is the new Academy Chair for the region of France
- Cristina Jolonch is the new Academy Chair for the region of Spain and Portugal
- Crystyl Mo is the new Academy Chair for the region of China and Korea

West USA and West Canada: Michalene Busico is a nationally recognised editor and writer with experience in top posts across the US. Formerly food editor at both The New York Times and Los Angeles Times, she is now dining editor of Robb Report and is a regular contributor on wine, spirits and cocktails. Her expertise spans food, fashion, design, real estate and travel and she is co-author of Gourmet Cooking on a Budget, an instructional cookbook dedicated to making great food accessible to every home cook. She is based in Malibu, California. Michalene takes over from S.Irene Virbila, whose tenure as an Academy Chair comes to an end after six successful years.

France: Writer and consultant Nicolas Chatenier has immersed himself in the world of French cuisine for more than 10 years. In 2012 he published Mémoires de Chef, a detailed and vibrant account of the Nouvelle Cuisine movement in France in the 1970s. He is a regular contributor on food and restaurant issues to Le Monde, Vanity Fair and GQ, and is currently working on a TV documentary about the history of French chefs over the last 40 years. He is based in Paris and succeeds Andrea Petrini, whose contribution to The World’s 50 Best Restaurants over the last decade is greatly appreciated.

Spain and Portugal: Cristina Jolonch is a journalist with more than 25 years' experience writing for La Vanguardia, one of Spain’s biggest newspapers. She has travelled extensively in Spain and internationally as a writer and editor, penning the book, Guía secreta: dónde comen los grandes chefs (Secret guide: where the great chefs eat). Most recently, Cristina co-directed Snacks: Bite for a Revolution, a documentary film about the gastronomic revolution that took place in Spain triggered by the influence of the legendary El Bulli. Cristina is based in Barcelona and takes over from Roser Torras, who is stepping down due to her independent business interests.

China and Korea: Crystyl Mo is a freelance food writer, editor, TV host and consultant who has been charting China’s burgeoning restaurant scene for over a decade. The former food editor of Time Out Shanghai, she has contributed to international
publications including Travel + Leisure, Food & Wine, Condé Nast Traveler, AFAR and CNNGo. Having grown up in the US, she moved to China 19 years ago and is married to a well-known TV chef and restaurateur. Based in Shanghai, Crystyl is an equity partner in tech start-up Bon App and is also training to be a health and well-being coach. She takes over from Boris Yu, who steps aside following his five-year tenure as Academy Chair.

The organisers of The World's 50 Best Restaurants would like to take this opportunity to thank S.Irene Virbila, Andrea Petrini, Roser Torras and Boris Yu for their immense contributions to the success of The World's 50 Best Restaurants programme.

### Academy Chairs

In order to ensure the fair representation of the global restaurant scene, The World's 50 Best Restaurants divides the world into 27 geographical regions. Each region has an Academy Chair appointed for their knowledge of their part of the restaurant world, their independence and their contacts across the gastronomic sector. These chairs each select a voting panel of 36 (including themselves), ensuring a balanced selection of chefs, restaurateurs, food writers, restaurant critics and well-travelled gourmets. These voters, numbering almost 1,000 in total, make up The Diners Club® World's 50 Best Restaurants Academy. In turn, their votes create The World's 50 Best Restaurants list. Regular rotation of Academy Chairs helps ensure the make-up of the Academy remains fresh.

### The World's 50 Best Restaurants

The World's 50 Best Restaurants list provides an annual snapshot of the opinions and experiences of almost 1,000 international restaurant industry experts. It is a globally recognised gastronomic reference point which showcases leading trends and highlights great restaurants from all corners of the Earth. What constitutes ‘best’ is left to the judgement of these trusted and well-travelled gourmets. There is no pre-determined check-list of criteria, but there are strict voting rules.

The World's 50 Best Restaurants' voting process and results are subject to independent adjudication by world-renowned professional services consultancy Deloitte.

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