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FLEMING'S ANNOUNCES **CULINARY COMPETITION WINNERS**

(Newport Beach, CA – October 21, 2008) In a surprise upset, the winner of **Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar's Culinary Competition** was the youngest and least experienced of the six O.C. culinary student finalists. **Kevin Bui**, 19, of Cypress and a freshman in **Cypress College's** Hotel Restaurant Culinary Arts program, walked off the with the \$5,000 first prize.

In second place winning \$3,000 was Corona del Mar resident **Patrick DiGiacomo**, 53, a student at **Laguna Culinary Arts**. **Caitlin Knoop**, 20, of San Clemente and enrolled in **Orange Coast College's** Culinary Arts program, came in third, winning \$2,000.

As part of the restaurant's tenth anniversary celebration, Fleming's sponsored a culinary competition Saturday, October 18th, where six finalists created a two course menu utilizing Fleming's core ingredients of jumbo shrimp, beef tenderloin, potatoes, mushrooms and spinach or asparagus. The 90 minute cook off was followed by a judging period where the dishes were evaluated on taste, creativity and plating. The three judges were **Orange County Register** food editor **Cathy Thomas**; celebrity chef and radio personality **Jamie Gwen**; and Fleming's executive company chef **Russell Skall**.

Bui's winning dishes were "**Gone Shrimpin:**" Shrimp served in a martini glass in an avocado salad with tomato, radish, lime, cilantro and red onion, garnished with a deep-fried green olive; and "**Je Ne Sais Quoi:**" Roasted beef tenderloin with cabernet sauvignon veal demi-glace sauce with mashed potatoes and spinach with bacon bits and shallots. Thomas described the dishes as "irresistible."

Located at 455 Newport Center Drive in Fashion Island, **Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar** offers the best in prime steakhouse dining with a sophisticated, progressive wine list featuring a 100 world class wines served by the glass. It has received accolades from both *Food & Wine* and *Wine Spectator* magazines. **Fleming's** was launched in Newport Beach, California in 1998, a collaboration between **Bill Allen** and **Paul Fleming**, and was recognized shortly thereafter by *Nation's Restaurant News* as one of its ten "Hot New Concept" award winners.

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