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**CHICAGO RESIDENT TIMOTHY MICHAEL ANNOUNCED AS WINNER OF THE  
2008 S.PELLEGRINO™ ALMOST FAMOUS CHEF<sup>SM</sup> NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL COMPETITION**

Michael Shows Off his Culinary Expertise to Win a Spot at the Finals Competition

(Chicago, IL, January 25, 2008) – Last night at Backstage Bistro at **The International Culinary School at The Illinois Institute of Art – Chicago** student Timothy Michael was announced the winner of the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual S.Pellegrino™ *Almost Famous Chef*<sup>SM</sup> North Central Regional Competition. Assembled celebrity judges **Alec Bruggenthies** of **Blue Water Grill**, **Roger Herring** of **Socca**, **Allison Perlik** of **Restaurants & Institutions**, **Don Newcomb** of **Chicagourmets**, **David Lissner** of **Dining Chicago**, and **Abbie Jarman** of **Chef Magazine**, and **Joncarl Lachman** (winner of the first *Almost Famous Chef Competition*) of **HB: Home Bistro** awarded Michael the highly respected regional title and a chance to compete at the Finals Competition to be held at The Culinary Institute of America at Greystone, in Napa Valley, Calif., March 7–10. At the Finals event, Michael will vie against nine other competitors from regions across the United States and Canada for the chance to win the \$10,000 cash prize, a valuable career opportunity to work with a nationally recognized chef, and the honor of becoming the next S.Pellegrino *Almost Famous Chef*.

Michael, who is continuing his culinary education at The International Culinary School at The Illinois Institute of Art – Chicago, was given two hours to prepare his unique signature dish recipe, **Seared Veal Chop with Bourbon Mushroom Sauce, Corn Bread Pudding, and Stuffed Fried Okra**, in a fast-paced kitchen with tough competition from six fellow culinary students representing The International Culinary School at The Illinois Institute of Art-Chicago, The International Culinary School at The Art Institutes International Minnesota, and Kendall College. Ranbir Batra, the reigning winner of The *Almost Famous Chef Competition* was there to lend his support to the students. After some hard-hitting evaluation from the judging panel, Michael was met with applause as he was announced the competition winner during a tasting reception for invited guests.

“I just want to thank S.Pellegrino for the opportunity to compete in the Finals Competition in Napa,” said Michael. “If I win, I’ll use the \$10,000 to start my own restaurant. My love for cooking and trying new things is what I think will make me successful.”

Staying true to its brand heritage, authenticity and support for the culinary community, The Almost Famous Chef Competition was created by S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water as a way to connect and encourage mentoring between top culinary students and highly respected chefs and influential media.

As a way to give back to local communities, S.Pellegrino has compiled the 2006 Almost Famous Recipe Book (\$25.99 Amazon.com, Target.com), a collection of finalists’ signature recipes from the 2006 competition. S.Pellegrino will donate a portion of the proceeds from the sale of each book to benefit Share Our Strength®, the nation’s leading organization working to end childhood hunger in America.

**About S.Pellegrino**

The #1 sparkling mineral water brand in fine dining restaurants, S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water has been appreciated as the perfect meal accompaniment since its discovery in the 13th century. High in the mountains north of Milan, the waters rise from an underground aquifer, where 14 distinct minerals in the limestone and volcanic rock impart a unique flavor. Lightly carbonated, S.Pellegrino is the ideal complement to every dining experience. For more information on S.Pellegrino, visit [www.sanpellegrino.com](http://www.sanpellegrino.com) or [www.nestle-watersna.com](http://www.nestle-watersna.com).



Timothy Michael  
The Illinois Institute  
of Art-Chicago

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