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FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE ON

7/18/2012

Ecobelli's to open doors August 4 for Laurina's Kitchen book launch party

Those wishing to stroll down Memory Lane with the authors of a new cookbook honoring the legacy of Laurina Inzinna Ecobelli, the late matriarch of Ecobelli's Tam O'Shanter Restaurant, are invited to attend a celebration inside the landmark at 1475 Route 50 in Ballston Spa from 5 to 7 p.m. on Saturday, August 4.

The book launch party for *Laurina's Kitchen* will also provide a rare opportunity to tour the once thriving Italian-American dining destination, according to co-authors Lora Lee and Tom Ecobelli, whose family owned and operated "The Tam" for more than four decades.

"We are grateful to owner Ginger Cannon Bailey, CEO of Racemark International and GGBailey.com and Tracy Metzger, Principal Broker at TL Metzger Associates, LLC for graciously allowing the doors of what was our grandparents' restaurant to reopen for this special occasion," said Tom Ecobelli, who is flying in from Los Angeles to join his sister Lora Lee of Saugerties in welcoming guests and signing books at the event.

The siblings, who grew up in Ballston Spa, are now actors as well as screenwriters and producers of the forthcoming feature film *Chickadee*, which is based on an inspiring story that was recorded in their grandmother's journal nearly a century ago. *Laurina's Kitchen* is a companion piece to the movie, which will be filmed in the greater Capital Region.

Other members of the Ecobelli family will join the authors at the book launch during which vintage images and memorabilia will be displayed and complimentary refreshments will be served. Special guests will include award-winning composer David Amram, who is creating the score for *Chickadee*, and his talented daughter, Alana. (Alana is also a great-granddaughter of Laurina Ecobelli.)

While *Chickadee* captures Laurina's courage as well as her pain, *Laurina's Kitchen* is a light-hearted and heart-warming 108-page collection of many previously secret family recipes as well as a treasure trove of previously unpublished memories. The richly illustrated 8.5" x 11" literary keepsake is priced at \$31.50.

Published by Square Circle Press near Voorheesville, *Laurina's Kitchen* is described by publisher Richard Vang as "a colorful and eclectic mix of ephemera, such as menus, postcards and newspaper articles" which collectively bring this Upstate New York institution back to life. "Peppered throughout are images of the Ecobellis and their extended 'family' around the restaurant and at home as well as special memories contributed by staff, patrons and friends who were all a part of the restaurant's devoted community," said Mr. Vang, who recently enjoyed a private tour of Ecobelli's, courtesy of Ginger Cannon Bailey and Tracy Metzger.

"There is a long association between the Bailey family and Ecobelli's," said Mrs. Bailey. "My husband, Bob, grew up at another local institution, FoCastle Farm. He remembers the great family dinners they shared at Ecobelli's starting in the 1950s. The authentic Italian food was the best. We are proud to have preserved the original Ecobelli's and are excited about the cookbook and the movie as a way to recreate a famous brand. We are searching for the right chef to bring back to the Capital District the delicious recipes from *Laurina's Kitchen*."

Ms. Metzger shares that vision, stating: “When I first walked into Ecobelli’s I could just tell it had been a successful restaurant and truly wish for it to be alive again for future generations. We now have the recipes, all we need is the right chef since the restaurant is in turnkey condition.”

Publisher Vang first heard about *Laurina’s Kitchen* from Schenectady’s city and county historian Don Rittner – who is also a Schenectady film commissioner. “Don and I were in contact about a forthcoming book of his in late December 2011 when he mentioned the cookbook in the context of the film project *Chickadee* – which was inspired by an Italian immigrant girl who grew up to be the matriarch of Ecobelli family,” said Mr. Vang.

Under the direction of Emmy award-winning filmmaker Arthur Allan Seidelman, *Chickadee* is expected to bring star power that includes Raoul Bova, Ellen Burstyn, Chris Cooper, Julie Kavner, Simon Miller and Giovanna Zacarias to the Capital Region.

Chickadee will be shown in theatres and at major film festivals around the world, according to Mr. Seidelman, whose credits include more than 50 movies and 100 television productions. He is presently directing *Quattrocento*, a miniseries about the Renaissance.

Director Seidelman expressed confidence that *Chickadee* will become a classic in the style of *To Kill A Mockingbird* or *The Color Purple*. The independent motion picture is budgeted at \$5-million and will commence production once funding is completed. Laurina Film Partners is presently working with a number of interested investors and benefactors to make their dream a reality.

Those wishing to discuss the film project with Tom and Lora Lee Ecobelli will also have opportunities to do so during the book launch weekend that will also include a wine club tasting event from 5 to 8 p.m. on Friday, August 3 at the Sand Creek Wine & Liquor Store at 98 Wolf Road in Albany. Other signings are still being planned; those interested are encouraged to review the Calendar of Events on the book’s web site (www.squarecirclepress.com) for additional updates.

Retailers who are interested in carrying *Laurina’s Kitchen* are also encouraged to contact the publisher at www.squarecirclepress.com. To learn more about the motion picture, please visit www.ChickadeeTheMovie.com or email Tom Ecobelli at aquabell@aol.com. Tracy Metzger can be reached at 518-426-5211 or tracy@tlmetzger.com or www.tlmetzger.com.

BOOK INFORMATION:

The book is available in paperback, and is for sale both online and through retail bookstores. For more information about how and where to purchase *Laurina’s Kitchen* or other titles, products and services available from Square Circle Press, visit the publisher’s web site at www.squarecirclepress.com.

Laurina’s Kitchen: Generations of Heirloom Dishes from the Ecobelli Family

by Lora Lee Ecobelli & Tom Ecobelli

ISBN-13: 978-0-9833897-9-8

ISBN-10: 0-9833897-9-9

LCCN: 2012943731

SCP Product #: SCP-0040

Retail Price: \$31.95

Physical: 108 pages, 8.5" x 11", softcover, color interior, 234 illustrations

Retail Distribution: Square Circle Press (40% publisher discount); others TBD - contact us

Library Distribution: Square Circle Press (25% publisher discount); other TBD - contact us

Publication Date: August 4, 2012