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Six Specialty Food Retailers Stand Out as the Best of 2007
These outstanding merchants serve an ever-increasing niche of consumers

New York, NY (May 23, 2007) – *Specialty Food Magazine* and the National Association for Specialty Food Trade, Inc., (NASFT) are honored to present the six Outstanding Specialty Food Retailers of 2007: **Central Market**, Dallas, TX; **Fairway Market**, New York, NY; **Pastoral Artisan Cheese, Bread & Wine**, Chicago, IL; **Sickles Market**, Little Silver, NJ; **Liberty Heights Fresh**, Salt Lake City, UT; and **Dorothy Lane Market**, Dayton, OH.

Despite diverse formats and different clientele, these retailers share a philosophy of making eating a pleasurable and educational experience. From an established Manhattan institution to a three-year-old European-style cheese shop in Chicago, from an eight-store specialty supermarket chain to a nearly century-old family farm turned retailer, each of this year's winners are dedicated to providing shoppers with an array of high-quality, innovative, artisan specialty foods and beverages in attractive settings with the highest level of service.

To identify Outstanding Specialty Food Retailer candidates, the NASFT asked its 2,500 supplier members to name retailers who they admired. Those with the most nominations were asked to submit entries, which included photographs, store facts, articles, menus, newsletters, press kits, training manuals and letters from customers. This information was evaluated by a panel of former Outstanding Specialty Food Retailer winners, manufacturers, distributors and journalists, who chose these six Outstanding Retailers.

The winners are the definition of a successful specialty food store: They provide excellent customer service, introduce their communities to products not found in mainstream grocery stores, and strive to stock the highest-quality, exclusive products that are not mass-produced. In addition, they devote a substantial amount of time to educating their staff and consumers by regularly providing samples, demonstrations and cooking classes. Ultimately, these stores succeed in showing consumers that specialty foods fit into everyday lifestyles.

WINNER INFORMATION

Central Market: The inspiration for Central Market began when Charles Butt, president of parent company H.E.B, a 300-store grocery chain in the U.S. and Mexico, acquired a tract of property in Austin. Butt was motivated to launch a concept for creatively selling the finest imported and domestic products while offering superior service. With the help of long-time H.E.B employee John Campbell, the first Central Market opened in Austin in 1994. Today, the company has eight stores throughout Texas, each offering a mind-boggling selection of everything edible. Then there are the “foodies,” Central Market’s so-named employees, who are constantly ready to espouse their prolific knowledge about everything sold in the store’s departments, including produce, an 80-foot seafood case, meat, beer/wine, bulk foods, a healthy living section, specialty grocery, dairy, bakery, deli, a selection of 600 cheeses and prepared foods. A multitude of learning opportunities such as in-store events, cooking school classes, an online newsletter, and active and passive demos makes Central Market a place to exchange and share ideas in addition to a dizzying selection of specialty foods. *Contact: Chris Bostard, Central Market, 2777 N. Stemmons, No. 1084, Dallas, TX 75207; 214.252.5921; www.centralmarket.com*

Fairway Market: Fairway Market, a pioneering specialty food retailer, lives up to its motto in that it is “Like No Other Market.” Anyone in search of notable and hard-to-find foodstuffs, as well as those looking for everyday staples, can find them in one of the four New York-based Fairway stores: the original on Manhattan’s Upper West Side, outposts in Harlem and Plainview, Long Island, and the massive emporium opened last year in Red Hook, Brooklyn. Originally established in the 1940s as a full-service fruit and vegetable store, Fairway today offers more than 35,000 items, with selections that traverse prepared foods, smoked fish, baked goods, organic and natural foods, cheeses and other dairy products. It is all about great food—in volume: More than 15,000 liters of olive oil, 7 tons of coffee, and 37,000 boxes of Clementines head out of the market’s doors on a weekly basis. *Contact: Dan Glickberg, Fairway Market, 480-500 Van Brunt St., Red Hook, Brooklyn 11204; 718.694.6868; www.fairwaymarket.com*

Pastoral Artisan Cheese, Bread & Wine: Pastoral Artisan Cheese, Bread & Wine in Chicago has yet to celebrate its third birthday, but has gained local and national attention for an array of delicious specialties and great customer service. Since opening in August 2004, Greg O’Neill, co-owner of the European-inspired market, and business partner Ken Miller have focused on making the customer experience educational, approachable, fun and appetizing. O’Neill and Miller set out to create a place where they could showcase small-batch, hand-crafted products in an intimate environment with attentive and thoughtful service. Eschewing mass-produced goods, they gathered artisan offerings from near and far and created what O’Neill calls “an adult candy store for those who love food and wine.” Nearly 600 items are packed into the 382-square-foot store. More than 120 artisan cheeses are on hand as well as fresh-from-the-oven breads, small-production wines, a gourmet olive bar, international charcuterie, sandwiches and packaged goods. A focus on being who they are and staying true to their governing principles helps Pastoral’s owners remain competitive with larger players. *Contact: Greg O’Neill, Pastoral Artisan Cheese, Bread & Wine, 2945 N. Broadway, Chicago, IL 60657; 773.472.4781; www.pastoralartisan.com*

Sickles Market: In 1908, the Sickles family set up a seasonal farm stand to supply locals with freshly picked produce. The first day, they pulled in \$35 for their efforts. Today, third-generation-owner Bob Sickles still offers customers produce grown on the family farm, but as only one part of the business. In 1998, the Little Silver, N.J.-based Sickles Market transformed itself into a year-round specialty food store and garden center, maintaining gross annual sales of \$10 million. The Sickles Market facility sits on more than six acres of land, about 45 minutes from Manhattan in an affluent N.J. suburb. Nearly 15,000 square feet of space is dedicated to retail. In addition to produce, Sickles sells artisan baked goods, imported and domestic cheeses, European-style butters and caviar. Sickles is a community fixture that participates in various charities; last year its annual fundraiser brought in more than \$80,000 for a local charity that brings holiday music to disadvantaged people in institutions and soup kitchens. Community outreach—along with top-quality products and superior service—are the principles that have grown the retailer’s success for nearly a century. *Contact: Bob Sickles, Sickles Market, 1 Harrison Ave., Little Silver, NJ 07739; 732.741.9563; www.sicklesmarket.com*

Liberty Heights Fresh: Since opening Liberty Heights Fresh 14 years ago, Owner Steven Rosenberg has been committed to offering the Salt Lake City community food that is innovative, fresh, and in his words, “authentic.” Much of what is available at Liberty Heights Fresh is grown and produced by family farms and traditional producers using artisan methods. Rosenberg packs nearly 2,500 products in the 2,350-square-foot location, which once served as a filling station and is now a spot where customers fuel up on the latest local, regional, national and international specialty foods. Products span from traditional specialty groceries to locally grown and organic fruits and vegetables, fresh meat, artisan breads, organic dairy, farmstead and artisan cheese, charcuterie, party platters and gift baskets. A successful catering menu enables the merchant to expand its reach into the community, helping drive traffic back into the store and growing weekly transactions to about 2,000. As a locally owned business, Liberty Heights Fresh also gives back to the community by donating time, money and food to local events, and educating customers at every opportunity. Rosenberg was recently named as one of the best and the brightest in Utah’s dining scene in the 10th Annual Dining Awards presented by *Salt Lake City* magazine. *Contact: Steven Rosenberg, Liberty Heights Fresh, 1300 S. 1100, East Salt Lake City, UT 84105; 801.583.7374; www.libertyheightsfresh.com*

Dorothy Lane Market: You could call Calvin Mayne and the staff at Dorothy Lane Market “investigative food travelers.” Not necessarily in search of the next big thing, their goal is instead to immerse themselves in food and its culture. It is only when they fully understand a product, that they’ll consider selling it at one of their three Dayton, Ohio, specialty food supermarkets. Whether looking for olive oil from Sicily or preserves from Michigan, shoppers can be sure that Dorothy Lane staff have done their homework. For example, Scott Fox, bakery director, spent time in France learning from award-winning chefs the French method of fermentation. Dorothy Lane offers customers an unforgettable shopping experience—33,000 selections in meat, deli, bakery, wine, seafood, cheese, health foods, produce, floral and grocery categories. Customers purchase an average \$400,000 worth of goods on a weekly basis. The store is a leader in produce, and in fact originally opened in 1948 as a fruit stand. Today, the merchant maintains an exciting and tasteful array that includes more than 200 organic items. *Contact: Calvin Mayne, Dorothy Lane Market, 6177 Far Hills Ave., Dayton, OH 45459; 937.439.4210; www.dorothylane.com*

Established in 1952, the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade, Inc. (NASFT) is the only U.S. trade association representing all segments of the specialty food industry. Today, there are more than 2,500 members that produce nearly 180,000 specialty food products. For further information on the Fancy Food Show[®], visit the NASFT website at www.specialtyfood.com.

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