



# The Seelbach Hilton

## Louisville

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### **SEELBACH HILTON NAMES TODD RICHARDS EXECUTIVE CHEF**

(Louisville, KY) January 12, 2007 – The Seelbach Hilton has promoted Todd Richards to Hotel Executive Chef. Richards has been serving as Executive Chef of The Oakroom at The Seelbach Hilton, one of only 48 AAA Five-Diamond restaurants in the world. In his expanded role, Richards will also bring his culinary vision to Otto's, the hotel's more casual restaurant, as well as its large catering operation.

"Since his arrival in 2004, Todd Richards has masterfully infused his signature contemporary cuisine into the Seelbach Hilton's historic eatery, transforming The Oakroom into a modern culinary jewel," says Jon McFarland, General Manager of The Seelbach Hilton. "We look forward to Todd's influence on every aspect of our food service," adds McFarland.

Todd Richards was born 35 years ago into a Chicago family that loved cooking great food and loved to eat out. Lawry's Steak House in downtown Chicago was a favorite, along with trips every other week to Chinatown. Despite his auspicious food foundation, Richards' beginnings in the restaurant business could not have been more humble.

At the age of 14, without telling his father, Richards quit his part-time job stocking merchandise at Lane Bryant for a stint at a restaurant in Chinatown. He plucked chickens and mopped floors. While most would find the work demeaning and thankless because of the low pay, Richards loved every minute of it. He had the opportunity to taste exotic foods like barbecued chicken feet and fish head stew. It was in Chicago's Chinatown where this young aspiring chef developed a fascination with rice and the diversity of ingredients in Asian cooking. What Richards learned as a teenager about blending flavors, the salty, the sweet, the bitter and acidity, still influences his cooking today. Richards includes three to four of these flavors on every plate he produces.

Out of high school and despite his passionate calling to be a chef, Todd Richards tried to make a go of it as a math major at the University of Illinois. He was good at it, but bored, so he packed his bags and headed to Atlanta. There he served as Assistant Café Chef at the four-star Four Seasons and met his mentor, Executive Chef Daryl Evans, the first African American to compete in the Culinary Olympics. From the Four Seasons, Richards moved up the ladder to Restaurant Chef at the Ritz Carlton in Atlanta and the Five-Diamond Ritz Carlton in Palm Beach.



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### SEELBACH HILTON NAMES TODD RICHARDS EXECUTIVE CHEF -2

In January of 2004, Todd Richards was recruited by then Executive Chef Walter Leffler of The Seelbach Hilton's Oakroom. The mission was daunting -- to raise Louisville's profile on the national haute cuisine map. When Leffler returned to his native New Jersey, Richards was promoted Oakroom Executive Chef, where his work is getting rave reviews from both food critics and diners with sophisticated palates.

Richards describes his culinary style as classical ethnic with a modern interpretation. For example, he is noted for his novel twist on matzo balls, served with frog legs, watermelon and golden beets, as well as his pirogies, drizzled in duck confit, spinach and truffles.

The Food Network has taken notice and recently invited Todd Richards and his Chef de Cuisine, Duane Nutter, to compete in the popular program, *Iron Chef*. Richards has been sworn to secrecy as to who the winner is. The best-kept secret in Louisville is expected to air in early 2007.