

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Media Contacts:**

Erik Wolf, International Culinary Tourism Association  
(503) 750-7200 [erik@culinarytourism.org](mailto:erik@culinarytourism.org)

Joanne Sanborn, Specialty Travel Agents Association  
(810) 629-2386 [jsanborn@specialtytravelagents.com](mailto:jsanborn@specialtytravelagents.com)

### **Partnerships in the Travel Industry Create Successful Business Practices**

**March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009**– The Specialty Travel Agents Association (STAA) and The International Culinary Tourism Association (ICTA) announced a new partnership which provides both organizations with greater visibility in the increasingly important niche travel marketing space. STAA President Sandy McDowell welcomed the partnership by saying, “This partnership highlights the type of connection that STAA has envisioned as key components in the success of our members. This follows the line that points toward professionalism, expertise and specialization that is the heart of STAA’s mission”.

This agreement is an alliance that allows cooperative efforts to bring specialty travel agents and culinary tourism together, as well as providing opportunities for cross promotion, marketing support, and educational opportunities. “We are pleased to partner with the Specialty Travel Agents Association in its efforts to promote culinary tourism and applaud the group’s effort at identifying and promoting unique travel niches around the world” said Erik Wolf, President of the International Culinary Tourism Association. Creating a network of support within this fast growing area of culinary travel will benefit members of both organizations.

McDowell added, “Culinary travel is an exciting niche and we have found that many agents are expanding their business to include culinary travel and tours to enhance their clients experience. It is our hope that this new partnership will stimulate and advance the interest in culinary travel and help to grow the knowledge base of agents through ICTA’s new culinary travel certification course”. The ICTA’s Certified Culinary Tourism Professional (CCTP) program is the culinary tourism industry’s most comprehensive certification program of its kind. It gives a high level of credibility to a the sales and marketing efforts of culinary tourism businesses and destinations. In times like today when business owners must fight hard for every customer, an extra edge like CCTP designation is a necessary asset to help boost the success of culinary tourism businesses and destinations.

### **About the ICTA:**

The International Culinary Tourism Association is the world’s leading authority on culinary tourism, and is dedicated to help food and beverage manufacturers and providers, as well as

destinations and travel industry professionals, to package and promote their culinary treasures as marketable and sellable attractions. The ICTA and its affiliated organizations accomplish the mission by facilitating partnerships between complementary organizations (such as the STAA), facilitating culinary tourism product development and marketing, developing education, conducting and publishing research and promoting best practices in culinary tourism management.

For more information regarding becoming a member of the ICTA, partnering with the ICTA, or to learn more about the Association, please visit [www.culinarytourism.org](http://www.culinarytourism.org) or contact Erik Wolf at (505) 750-7200 and at [erik@culinarytourism.org](mailto:erik@culinarytourism.org).

### **About the STAA:**

STAA is a premier resource working to develop and promote specialty travel, its agents, destinations and niche markets. By putting all specialty agent members, industry suppliers and CVB's under the umbrella of STAA's efforts, the goal of connecting travelers with the right specialist is accomplished and the rewards are shared by travelers, agents and industry alike. STAA's website is a professional and sophisticated approach to facilitate the connections between people and places.

For additional information on joining STAA, advertising, or for an interview and further information contact Public Relations Director, Joanne Sanborn at [jsanborn@specialtytravelagents.com](mailto:jsanborn@specialtytravelagents.com), 810.629.2386 or visit [www.specialtytravelagents.com](http://www.specialtytravelagents.com)

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