

For more information:

Andy McDermott
Shea, Inc.
612.594.4245
andym@shealink.com

Russell Klein
Meritage
651-222-5670
russell@meritage-stpaul.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Meritage expansion includes debut of oyster bar

ST. PAUL (November 30, 2010) – Meritage, downtown Saint Paul's award winning French brasserie has expanded, adding a larger bar including an oyster bar. Chef Russell and Desta Maree Klein, owners of Meritage have acquired an adjacent space in the historic Hamm Building and added about 1000 feet to the restaurant. The pair worked with Shea, Inc., a Minneapolis-based design and marketing firm, on the design of the new space, which is opening to the public on Saturday, December 4.

The expansion will include a full bar and counter-height seating for about 40. "The feel of the new bar will be just like Meritage, but a little bit sexier," explained Chef Russell Klein.

Features of the new space include a Parisian zinc bar top with a marine cut edge and a large back bar which was built to maintain the essence and character of the former cozy corner that was the four seat bar at Meritage, which is now 10 stools, with a traditional absinthe fountain as the centerpiece. The new bar offerings include a heightened focus on crafted and classic cocktails with a special focus on the sparkling variety, while continuing to offer the 200 selection wine list and carefully selected beer list Meritage has been know for.

The Klein's are particularly passionate about the new oyster bar, one of their favorite aspects of the traditional French Brasserie. Chef Klein grew up in New York City and on Long Island, NY, and spent many of his childhood days at the ocean with his grandfather catching and eating all manner of seafood and shellfish. His love of fresh seafood will be reflected in Meritage's new shellfish program, which promises to be the best in the Twin Cities. "I am so excited to share my passion for oysters with our guests," said Chef Klein. "We are bringing a little bit of the sea to Saint Paul," he said.

A new small plates menu will include house-made merguez sausage, smoked confit chicken wings and Tart Flambé, an Alsatian-style pizza with crème fraiche, caramelized onions and bacon. Chef Klein is also serving cake, pronounced kek, a savory bread with ham and cheese that is commonly found in France, but not in restaurants or bakeries; it is a home baked treat that turns up at gatherings like picnics and potlucks, and it is a perfect accompaniment to a bottle of wine.

The bar menu will be served from lunch through late night. "It will be a great spot to grab a quick bite and a drink before or after a show or event, but it will also be great for those who want to sit back and unwind for a while," explained Desta Maree Klein. "We're looking forward to giving our guests many more options to dine at Meritage," she continued.

The bar area was designed to be a natural extension of the restaurant with complementary finishes and materials. "We want it to feel as though it has always been here," commented David Shea, who worked with the Kleins on the design. "We used warm teak and butternut woods and mosaic tile for the flooring. We brought in some of the character of the historic building's exterior

and actually uncovered a column inside that was made of the same fired ceramic tile, which even contained graffiti from 1921." With booths and high-top seating, the ambience is casual, yet sophisticated.

Meritage is currently closed for renovations. A VIP Party and media preview is taking place Friday, December 3, 2010. Contact Chef Russell Klein at 651-492-3933 to inquire about reservations. Meritage is reopening to the public on Saturday, December 4, 2010.

Meritage, 410 St Peter St., St Paul, Minnesota 55102; (651) 222-5670; www.meritage-stpaul.com

Shea, Inc. is a marketing and design firm integrating expertise in marketing, architecture and interior design. Shea blends diverse perspectives, skills, cultures and knowledge into solid creative strategy for clients. Shea's client list includes Macy's, TCF National Bank, Morton's The Steakhouse, Wells Fargo and Midcontinent Communications. For more information on Shea, please contact Andy McDermott at 612.594.4245 or visit our Web site at www.shealink.com or our blog at www.sheaanything.blogspot.com.