

For more information:

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Shea, Inc. redesign of Chez Colette debuts this week at Sofitel Minneapolis

MINNEAPOLIS (February 10, 2010) – After being closed for a little more than a month, Chez Colette, the popular French restaurant in the Sofitel Minneapolis, is reemerging just in time for Valentine’s Day as Colette Bar & Bistro. The new name is part of a brand refresh and restaurant redesign, which is the first renovation since the hotel opened in 1975. Sofitel is working with Shea, Inc., a Minneapolis-based design and marketing firm, on the restaurant and bar’s new look. Colette Bar & Bistro will be open for business this Thursday, February 11, 2010.

“The original design was done beautifully,” claimed Cori Kuechenmeister, an interior designer with Shea, who explained that the original design really captured the essence of a true Parisian bistro, with details such as intricate European brass coat racks and large wall murals. “We realized immediately that we wanted to retain the soul of Chez Colette but give it a modern twist, especially in light of the ultra-modern design updates recently made to the Sofitel.”

While the modern décor of the hotel certainly underscored the fact that Chez Colette was in need of a refresh after 35 years, it was really a shift in the restaurant and hotel’s demographics that encouraged the changes. “We absolutely considered the long-time patrons who have a passion for the traditions of Chez Colette, but we also wanted to consider new generations of customers—especially the single business travelers—and address what might appeal to them as well.”

Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette, known simply as Colette, was an early 20th Century novelist and flamboyant performer, best-known for her novel, *Gigi*, which was later made into a successful Broadway musical and lucrative Hollywood film. She was the inspiration for the design of Chez Colette in 1975 and Kuechenmeister explained that she is also the inspiration for the redesign. “We looked at her history and tried to imagine what would appeal to a modern-day Colette.”

The new design unified the bar and restaurant as a single concept by removing a wall that separated them. It was replaced with a large community table, complete with internet accessibility, that invites people—especially the single traveler—to eat, drink and work in a casual, yet sophisticated environment. The new décor retained the coat racks and murals of the former space and added modern, feminine design touches. The dining room features a variety of seating options interspersed with casework and stations that draw attention to the things the restaurant is famous for: wine, bread and pastries. Private dining and business meeting areas were added and a dramatic new bright red storefront announces that this is truly a Colette for modern times.

“We highlighted all that was great about the old space, but wanted to add new levels of comfort with decorative lighting and warm colors and finishes,” said Kuechenmeister. Along with the design changes, Shea also developed the new name, new logo and new menus.

“We wanted to hit home that it is the same fine dining it has always been, and we just added some modern comforts and brought it into the 21st century.”

Sofitel Minneapolis, Colette Bar and Bistro, 5601 West 78th Street, Bloomington, MN 55439, (952) 835-1900, www.sofitelmplsdining.com.

Sofitel is the only French luxury hotel brand with a presence on five continents with 150 addresses, in more than 50 countries. Sofitel offers contemporary hotels and resorts adapted to today's more demanding and more versatile consumers who expect and appreciate beauty, quality and excellence. Whether situated in the heart of a major city like Paris, New York or Bangkok, or nestled away in a country landscape in French Polynesia or Brazil, each Sofitel property offers a genuine experience of the French art de vivre.

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.

###