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Owners of Deleece to launch Shochu, a new restaurant and lounge, in Wrigleyville

Small plates of American/Asian food offered at late-night lounge

/24-7PressRelease/ - CHICAGO, IL, February 15, 2008 - Lynne Wallack and John Handler, husband and wife owners of the popular Lakeview restaurant Deleece, plan to launch a new restaurant and lounge, Shochu (pronounced show-chew), in April at 3313 N. Clark St. in the Wrigleyville neighborhood of Chicago. Josh Hansen will be the executive chef and partner in the new venture and will continue to head the kitchen at Deleece (4004 N. Southport; 773-325-1710).

Shochu will be a unique, first of its kind small plate restaurant and lounge, named for shochu, the #1 Japanese distilled spirit typically made from rice, barley, sweet potatoes or black sugar. "Shochu will be the first stylish, contemporary American restaurant to feature shochu as its signature liquor," said Wallack. "The cocktail menu will feature a large collection of delicious cocktails that showcase this wonderful beverage like shochu with guava and ginger or shochu with green apple and lychee. Of course at brunch we'll be serving shochu bloody marys and shochu mimosas."

Shochu's food offering will feature contemporary American small plates with an Asian edge. "On the coasts, the few restaurants featuring shochu are Japanese pubs (Izakayas) with traditional Japanese ambience and food," said Wallack. "Our restaurant will be the first American shochu lounge. We discovered what the Japanese and Koreans have been craving for years, and decided to introduce it to Chicago. It's fashionable, yet healthy. Or perhaps it's fashionable because it's healthy. Either way, we think that Chicagoans are going to love it."

Shochu has taken Japan by storm—in 2004 it surpassed sake for the first time to become the largest selling liquor in Japan—and has become the "in vogue" alcoholic beverage in New York and Los Angeles. It has also become very popular with women. Shochu is similar in taste to vodka, but it has some advantages which the owners predict will make it very popular in Chicago. Among them, it is lower in calories and is usually less alcoholic than vodka. Shochu is very smooth so it blends well with many ingredients, making it very appropriate for a wide range of cocktail recipes. It is metabolized in such a way that it is less likely to cause a morning-after hangover.

There have also been studies about the health benefits of shochu. Dr. Hiroyuki Sumi, a researcher at the Japanese Ministry of Education who is an expert on the enzyme urokinase, acknowledges that shochu contains a higher amount of urokinase than other alcoholic beverages. Urokinase is an enzyme that leads to natural stimulation of blood clot breakdown, especially the breakdown of thrombosis (clots formed inside blood vessels, which obstruct the flow of blood). Thus shochu may have the preventative benefit of helping to reduce the risk of heart attacks, strokes and diabetes.

For more information on the forthcoming Shochu restaurant and lounge, please contact Lynne Wallack at Deleece, (773) 325-1710.