



## PRIME CUT CAFÉ & WINE BAR DEBUTS IN ORANGE

*Emphasis on quality and value anchors  
bold newcomer to OC's dining scene*

**(Orange, CA – January 8, 2009)** Affordable luxury with a modern, American flavor is the mark of **Prime Cut Café**, central Orange County's newest landmark on the restaurant landscape.

Industry veteran **Mo Iqbal** is the mind behind the 233 seat independent enterprise that blends three potent trends: value pricing, enlightened American comfort fare, and extensive wine offerings in a casual setting. The 4685 square-foot site is located adjacent to the cinema multiplex in the **Stadium Promenade** entertainment center.

"I'm confident this restaurant will appeal on many levels to an underserved audience, one that is hungry for top-notch food and wine in relaxed, neighborhood surroundings," said Iqbal. "Some might say this is a tough time to launch a new concept, but we are delivering unexpectedly sophisticated cuisine at really attractive prices. The initial feedback from our guests has been outstanding."

Consulting chef **Kelly Mullarney** spent over a year developing lunch and dinner fare he describes as "comfortable and contemporary American dishes, perfected." Much of the food is made from scratch such as house-smoked salmon, house-brined pork, and burgers made from certified Angus beef ground daily on site. Underpinning the menu are first-rate ingredients from a roll call of top suppliers like **Newport Meat** (beef), **Salmon Creek** (pork), **Shelton Farms** (chicken), **McGrath Farm** (produce) and **Cowgirl Creamery** (cheese).

### FOOD & MENU

In keeping with its quality-meets-casual style, the menu is a single page of well-edited choices that range from wine-friendly starters to hearty entrees to luscious sides. Several shareable starters are clearly designed to pair appealingly with wine: mini grilled-Gruyere and prosciutto sandwiches, a petite pot of cheese fondue with roasted garlic, or assorted olives marinated on-site with preserved lemon and herbs. A rotation of five farm house cheeses is accompanied with honeycomb, candied nuts and artisan breads.

Classic first courses include a changing roster of house-smoked salmon with fennel slaw and fresh horseradish cream, baby iceberg wedge salad with applewood-smoked bacon and Point Reyes blue cheese dressing, and fritto misto featuring flash-fried calamari, rock shrimp, haricot vert and olives. For a novel choice, there is The BLT salad, a stack of toasted rustic bread, sliced prosciutto, wild arugula and fresh burrata cheese strewn with juicy heirloom tomatoes.

Slow-roasted Prime rib and aged steaks are the centerpiece of the dinner menu. For traditionalists, three Prime rib cuts (8 oz., 14 oz. and 20 oz.) come with Yorkshire pudding and

creamed spinach. The Chef's Cut Prime rib is 20 oz. on the bone, seasoned and seared in cast iron for maximum texture and flavor. Four signature steaks--Prime sirloin, filet mignon, New York strip and bone-in rib eye cuts--include potato gratin and a head of roasted garlic. For market price, an 8 oz. Maine lobster tail can be added to any beef cut to customize a surf & turf combo.

Additional dinner entrees include Shelton Farms Chicken, roasted to order, or braised beef short ribs with mascarpone polenta and root vegetables. At lunch, burgers, sandwiches and large salads are spotlighted, and several are served at dinner as well, such as the bacon-blue burger and the seared tuna 'Nicoise' salad.

Savory dinner sides are large enough to share. They include favorites like sautéed Burgundy mushrooms, roasted beets, crispy fried onion strings and fresh cut fries with sea salt. At lunch, look for honey cider slaw and warm potato salad.

All desserts are prepared or baked to order and feature a whiff of nostalgia. There are warm cookies and cold milk for kids of every age, a seasonal fruit cobbler topped with a scoop of vanilla bean ice cream, and a whimsical take on French doughnuts with pots of varied jams for dipping.

## WINE BAR

A modern approach to wine is another inventive way Prime Cut Café & Wine Bar elevates casual dining. Over 75 labels are offered by the taste, flight, glass or bottle (though a handful of iconic wines like Napa's Dominus Estate are sold only by the bottle). Spanning producers from the old and new world, the dynamic list is exciting for both novices and aficionados. Yes, there is Pinot Noir from Sonoma, but also discoveries like Cariñena from Spain.

Affordability adds further appeal; 70% of the 75 wines are priced under \$50 per bottle. You can even try before you buy: start with a 2-oz. taste and that cost is deducted from a bottle's price. Wines are also offered for retail sale at 'out the door' prices that rival many value-priced wine shops.

Wine service is a step above the typical café model. Flights are supplied in a wooden tray that displays notes for each wine behind a trio of **Riedel** crystal glasses. Varietal-specific **Stolz** stemware accompanies wines by the glass or bottle. Weekly tastings and daily specials are slated to begin in the weeks ahead.

Though wine has a starring role at Prime Cut Café, the bar is fully stocked for those in the mood for a cold Hoegaarden ale or a cocktail made from the well's premium spirits.

## DESIGN

Upon entry, the focal point is a U-shaped granite bar framed by soaring wine display cabinetry custom-crafted with dark woods. Dining rooms with booths, tables and banquettes flank either side of the bar. The west dining room opens to a tree-studded patio; the east dining room leads to a VIP room for private parties that can accommodate from 12 to 18. An exhibition kitchen, subtly placed to the rear of the dining areas, features cooks busily working away.

Surroundings are stylish but decidedly casual with a palette of rich browns and warm neutrals. Floors and table tops gleam with striking bare woods. Booths and banquettes are tastefully

upholstered in subtle, silky striped fabrics or handsome leather. Oversize framed mirrors add sparkle and dimension; grand, showpiece wine bottles and modern art and photography add visual interest. The feel is comfortable, understated, and pleasing to the eye.

## **PRIME CUT CAFÉ TEAM**

**Mo Iqbal, founder and proprietor**, is a restaurant industry veteran with over 30 years of corporate experience ranging from quick service to the dinnerhouse and franchise sectors. With an MBA from Claremont College, Iqbal's expertise encompasses operations, marketing, finance, and development. The Newport Coast resident is a passionate foodie and has worked on the Prime Cut Café concept for over four years.

**Kelly Mullarney, consulting chef**, is the proprietor of Chef Innovations, a comprehensive full-service consulting firm based in Orange County. A graduate of the prestigious Culinary Institute of America, the California native has worked with the Harris Ranch Inn & Restaurant, King's Seafood Company, House of Blues, Santa Monica Seafood, and renowned restaurateur-chef Mark Miller. Mullarney spent over a year developing the menu and made-from-scratch recipes for Prime Cut Café.

**Ronnie Arnold, executive chef**, is an Orange County native who has been associated with South Orange County's finest properties. After beginning his career at Partner's Bistro, a Laguna Beach landmark, he worked at the Dining Room at the Ritz Carlton in Laguna Niguel. Arnold was part of the opening culinary team at the Montage Resort and Spa in Laguna. Most recently he was executive chef at hush in Laguna Beach and chef de cuisine at Motif restaurant in the highly acclaimed St. Regis Monarch Beach Resort.

**Eric Sanders, general manager**, is an Irvine resident with over 20 years experience in the restaurant industry. Sanders entered the hospitality field after leaving the Marine Corps. Working his way up, he began in the kitchen at Chili's Grill & Bar, and has held management positions with Champps, B.J's Restaurant & Brewhouse and Fox Sports Grill.

**Nicolas Somers, wine director and bar manager**, hails from New York. Exposed to the best restaurants of Manhattan and globetrotting travels from an early age, Somers made his way west with food and beverage assignments in Park City for the 2002 Winter Olympics and the Sundance Film Festival. Landing in OC, Somers has worked at both the Cannery and Ritz restaurants in Newport Beach and Hotel la Casa del Camino and Rooftop Lounge in Laguna Beach. Prior to joining Prime Cut Café, he oversaw a wine list of over 750 labels for Bayside restaurant in Newport Beach.

Prime Cut Café is located at 1547 W. Katella Avenue in Orange. The phone number is 714-532-4300. Menus and more information may be found at [www.primecutcafe.com](http://www.primecutcafe.com)

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