

# Applebee's® Announces Chef Stephen Bulgarelli as New Chief Culinary Officer

## Seasoned Culinary Innovation Leader to Lead Menu Strategy at America's Largest Casual-Dining Restaurant

GLENDALE, Calif., Aug. 29, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Applebee's® Neighborhood Grill + Bar welcomes Stephen Bulgarelli as vice president and chief culinary officer to head its culinary team. With an extensive and accomplished background in the restaurant industry, a mind for menu innovation, and a deep commitment to guest satisfaction, Bulgarelli will lead the talented culinary team at Applebee's as they work to ensure every guest has something to look forward to when they dine at Applebee's.

"Chef Stephen possesses a unique balance of strategy, creativity, and team orientation that will elevate our menu and strengthen our culinary culture," said John Cywinski, president, Applebee's. "All of this coupled with his passionate focus on our guests makes Stephen the ideal partner for our franchisees."

With more than 120 years of combined experience, the Applebee's culinary team is starting a new chapter of menu innovation focused on returning to its roots. The team will elevate Applebee's neighborhood position around familiar favorites with an emphasis on abundant, indulgent value.

Noted Bulgarelli, "As the biggest casual-dining brand in the country, Applebee's is America's neighborhood kitchen, and I am honored to create original and downright good food that millions of people will be able to enjoy each week. In collaboration with an already stellar culinary team, we'll be focusing heavily on listening to our guests to help drive the changes that will further set Applebee's apart."

Bulgarelli has a rich background in the restaurant industry and a keen understanding for what restaurant guests want from a casual dining experience. Most recently, he spent seven years with Chili's, the last five as vice president of food and beverage. Prior to his tenure at Chili's, Bulgarelli was the vice president of culinary innovation at O'Charley's, held two culinary leadership roles with T.G.I. Friday's and was an executive chef at LSG Sky Chefs. He is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America at Hyde Park, N.Y.

Bulgarelli's accolades include recognition by *Nation's Restaurant News* in the 2008 MenuMasters Awards for Best Menu Revamp and again in the 2014 MenuMasters Awards for Best New Item. While head of food and beverage innovation at Chili's, the brand also received the 2016 COEX Innovation Award Culinary/Operations.

### About Applebee's®

Applebee's Neighborhood Grill + Bar offers a lively casual dining experience combining simple, craveable American fare, classic drinks and local drafts. All Applebee's restaurants are owned and operated by entrepreneurs dedicated to serving their communities and offering quality food and drinks with genuine, neighborly service. Applebee's is one of the world's largest casual dining brands; as of June 30, 2017, there are nearly 2,000 Applebee's franchise restaurants in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Guam and 15 other countries. Applebee's is franchised by subsidiaries of DineEquity, Inc. [NYSE: DIN], which is one of the world's



largest full-service restaurant companies.

### **Forward-Looking Statements**

Statements contained in this press release may constitute forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. You can identify these forward-looking statements by words such as "may," "will," "should," "could," "expect," "anticipate," "believe," "estimate," "intend," "plan" and other similar expressions. These statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors, which may cause actual results to be materially different from those expressed or implied in such statements. These factors include, but are not limited to: the effect of general economic conditions; the Company's indebtedness; risk of future impairment charges; trading volatility and the price of the Company's common stock; the Company's results in any given period differing from guidance provided to the public; the highly competitive nature of the restaurant business; the Company's business strategy failing to achieve anticipated results; risks associated with the restaurant industry; risks associated with locations of current and future restaurants; rising costs for food commodities and utilities; shortages or interruptions in the supply or delivery of food; ineffective marketing and guest relationship initiatives and use of social media; changing health or dietary preferences; our engagement in business in foreign markets; harm to our brands' reputation; litigation; fourth-party claims with respect to intellectual property assets; environmental liability; liability relating to employees; failure to comply with applicable laws and regulations; failure to effectively implement restaurant development plans; our dependence upon our franchisees; concentration of Applebee's franchised restaurants in a limited number of franchisees; credit risk from IHOP franchisees operating under our previous business model; termination or non-renewal of franchise agreements; franchisees breaching their franchise agreements; insolvency proceedings involving franchisees; changes in the number and quality of franchisees; inability of franchisees to fund capital expenditures; heavy dependence on information technology; the occurrence of cyber incidents or a deficiency in our cybersecurity; failure to execute on a business continuity plan; inability to attract and retain talented employees; risks associated with retail brand initiatives; failure of our internal controls; and other factors discussed from time to time in the Company's Annual and Quarterly Reports on Forms 10-K and 10-Q and in the Company's other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. The forward-looking statements contained in this release are made as of the date hereof and the Company assumes no obligation to update or supplement any forward-looking statements.

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