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St. Paul's Legendary Commodore Bar Reopens In October

Saint Paul – (October 15, 2015) The legendary 1920s, Jazz Era Commodore Bar, in all of its Art Deco glory, reopens on Tuesday, Oct. 27 as a full-service restaurant, bar, cocktail lounge and banquet venue in the iconic Commodore Hotel, located - as described when the hotel opened - “on Summit Avenue at Holly & Western” in the Cathedral Hill Neighborhood of Saint Paul. All the glitter and glamor of the original Art Deco elegance lives on in the meticulously restored interiors – timeless and comfortable lux appeal, which is echoed in the classically re-imagined American menu.

“The Commodore Hotel (and its bar) is one of the treasured historic landmarks of St. Paul. Great effort was made to retain and restore the original historic interiors. Food and beverage menus have been updated to appeal to contemporary tastes and expectations with very affordable prices,” says John Rupp, founder and chief executive officer of the Commodore’s parent company, St. Paul based Commonwealth Properties Inc., developer and current owner of among other local Saint Paul landmarks: W.A. Frost, The University Club, the Saint Paul Athletic Club, and a soon (mid 2016) to open Watson’s Manor, a boutique hotel located at 344 Summit Avenue.

Rumors of the Commodore’s reopening have rippled through the community for years, almost since its closing in 1984. In recent years, after Commonwealth’s purchase, it was operated as a private event venue, but the plan was always to eventually reopen to the public. As befits an establishment of its pedigree, the Commodore will again cater to a wide variety of customers, as it did when it opened as the place where luminaries of the day, such as authors F. Scott Fitzgerald and Sinclair Lewis, not to mention the odd Chicago Mafia figure, might be

noshing with locals from the neighborhood.

“The Commodore will be a place where people come and enjoy good food, good drink and good times at affordable prices in memorable spaces, like other Commonwealth projects. “We’re about creating experiences and places where people of all ages and walks of life can enjoy themselves,” says Rupp.

Fans of the distiller’s art will find much to cheer about at the new Commodore, with its expansive selection of craft distilled spirits. “We want to be the Twin Cities showcase for the best in locally and regionally distilled spirits,” says Bob Crew, director of food and beverage operations for Commonwealth Properties. The Commodore has forged close ties with many of the region’s top craft distilleries, including some in Chicago, Milwaukee and Iowa. “Some of the best craft distilleries in the country can be found here in the Midwest, and we plan on featuring the cream of the crop at the Commodore,” says Crew. The bar will feature a robust cocktail menu, many of them variations of classic concoctions from the golden age of cocktail culture – the 1920s to the 1940s, as well as extensive wine, beer and spirits offerings.

The Commodore dinner menu also draws on classic American dining influences, including variations on dishes popular in its early heydays of the 1920s and ‘30s. Chef Chris Gerster studied old menus from the period for inspiration in creating what he calls ‘a classically driven menu, incorporating influences from around the world today.’ “We want to be as true to some of the classic dishes of the 1920s as possible, while appealing to contemporary tastes and expectations,” says Gerster, who comes to the Commodore by way of more than 15 years of regional and national culinary experience – most recently as Executive Chef of the University Club. Among Gerster’s personal favorites from the menu, he cites entrees such as braised rabbit, and *blanchette de veau* – braised veal cooked in a white wine sauce, and a “really, really simple but classic, chicken dish.” For appetizers, he calls out the deviled eggs stuffed with lobster salad (rather than the yolks). The yolks emerge as a lightly fried tempura-flavored dish on their own.

“The Commodore occupies a special place in the history and life of St. Paul,” says Rupp. “We want it to be as special to people today, as it was when it was first opened in the 1920s.”

The Commodore Restaurant, Bar and Lounge will initially be open five days a week,

Tuesdays through Saturdays, 4 p.m. to midnight, with seating in the private banquet area for as many as 200 people. For more information and to make reservations, please call 651-330-5999, visit the Commodore website at www.theCommodorebar.com or check out the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/The-Commodore-Bar-Restaurant-799365103451198/timeline/>.

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