



LAS VEGAS DEBUT FOR CELEBRATED CHICAGO CHEF Shawn McClain Set to Open Sage Restaurant in ARIA at CityCenter

LAS VEGAS – When [ARIA Resort & Casino](#) opens at [CityCenter](#) – the dazzling urban resort destination set to debut on the Las Vegas Strip in late 2009 – Chef Shawn McClain, best known for acclaimed Chicago restaurants Spring, Green Zebra and Custom House, will don his toque at **Sage** Restaurant. **Sage** at ARIA will be McClain’s first restaurant project outside of his Midwestern hometown.

McClain, who earned the James Beard Foundation’s prestigious title of Best Chef Midwest in 2006, sees Las Vegas as a wonderful opportunity to stretch his culinary muscles and share his strongly held beliefs that a restaurant should provide an experience where the product, preparation and environment coexist. Such opportunities no doubt keep life interesting for chefs like McClain. The seafood-centric menu of his first Chicago restaurant, Spring, drew immediate raves. The vegetable-focused Green Zebra, which opened in 2004, challenged diners to embrace modern vegetarian small plates, while Custom House, which opened in 2005, brought an artisanal sensibility to a meat-focused restaurant.

When McClain, who also earned a James Beard Foundation nomination for Best New Restaurant and Esquire Magazine’s “Chef of the Year” award in 2001, opens **Sage** at ARIA, the influence of all three restaurants will be in evidence, with a spotlight on farm-to-table produce, artisanal meats and sustainable seafood. His commitment to creativity and innovation, combined with a traditional European sensibility, will result in a menu that is at once refined yet contemporary.

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At Sage, Chef McClain will focus on the seasons – asparagus in spring, tomatoes in late summer, and root vegetables in the fall - while paying homage to the suppliers with whom he works. The meats, fish and fowl he chooses will be served with accompaniments that respect the time of year while side dishes will be plucked from each season’s bounty.

The progressive beverage program will be spearheaded by a team of mixologists who not only mirror the chef’s commitment to seasonality and use of the best products, but also use the resources of Chef McClain’s kitchen, which will generate fresh fruit purees, seasonal garnishes and sustainably sourced ingredients for the bar. The wine list will be user-friendly, offering an array of interesting bottles – many international – in a price range that provides an ideal pairing for any diner.

Design firm Jacques Garcia Decoration, recognized around the world for its sophisticated and intriguing interiors, will create the restaurant space. Sage will be at once seductive and sophisticated; mysterious and exciting; yet comfortable and elegant.

Bart Mahoney, vice president of food and beverage at ARIA said, “When CityCenter opens it will forever change the skyline of Las Vegas in a spectacular way. In keeping with that sentiment, we sought the best chefs for ARIA. Shawn McClain’s talent, passion for the industry and commitment to his guests is exactly what we are looking for at ARIA.” He added, “We are thrilled to be working with such a culinary superstar and to introduce him to Las Vegas.”

When asked why he chose to open a restaurant in Las Vegas, Chef McClain said, “I have been so fortunate to have achieved many of my goals here in Chicago, an amazing city and great restaurant town. But I have always aimed high, seeking new challenges. ARIA at CityCenter is going to be such an awe-inspiring development; I am thrilled to be among the chefs and restaurateurs included in the project.”

ARIA is currently accepting reservations for Dec. 17 and beyond. Nightly room rates range from \$179 to \$799; suites range from \$500 to \$7,500. Reservations can be made via www.AriaLasVegas.com or 866-359-7757. Concierge service and reservations for spa, salon and restaurants will be available beginning in October.

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