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CONTACT:
Raluca State/Jennifer Green – BNC
Tel: 310.854.4863
Email: rstate@bncpr.com/jgreen@bncpr.com

SBE RESTAURANT GROUP'S KATSUYA RESTAURANT OPENS TO RAVE REVIEWS IN LOS ANGELES' STYLISH BRENTWOOD DISTRICT

Restaurant Pairs Creativity and Talents of Internationally Acclaimed Designer Philippe Starck with Master Sushi Chef Katsuya Uechi

The much-anticipated **Katsuya** restaurant opened in June 2006 in Los Angeles' Brentwood neighborhood – a prodigious pairing of the supreme talents of master sushi chef **Katsuya Uechi** and world-renowned designer **Philippe Starck**. Open for lunch and dinner, the restaurant has proved an instant hit with discriminating diners as well as the press, with chef Katsuya being named "Chef of the Year" by Angeleno magazine, which also lauded the eatery as "the most watched restaurant in the country." This is the first of several Katsuya restaurants to open in Los Angeles, and nationwide, in the coming years.

Owned by the Los Angeles-based **SBE Restaurant Group**, Katsuya unleashes the culinary wizardry of Chef Uechi, whose eponymous Los Angeles sushi restaurants are among the city's top-rated. Diners at Katsuya will be no less wowed by the spectacular environment created by Philippe Starck, whose trend-setting work is known the world over for its sheer brilliance and beauty. Katsuya represents the first Starck-designed property to open under a six-year exclusive signed agreement in 2005 between the designer and **SBE Entertainment Group** for nine distinct restaurant concepts in North America, Canada, the Caribbean and Mexico. In March 2006, this relationship was expanded to include a 15-year design exclusive with Starck for five hotel properties under a new luxury hospitality brand to launch in early 2008.

Commented SBE CEO Sam Nazarian, "I am incredibly proud and pleased to debut our first SBE property designed by Philippe Starck, and the pairing with a chef like Katsuya presents an incredible opportunity. We are

very excited to make this restaurant an integral part of the Los Angeles community, and a timeless brand as we expand in the coming years.”

Offering a provocative interpretation of both Japanese design and cuisine, Katsuya stimulates the senses in every possible way – creating a dining experience like no other. Designed as a Japanese “Bento box” that echoes the simplicity and essence of Japanese cuisine, the all-wood interior features bold illuminated photographs and clever design touches at every turn, a signature of Starck’s playful and limitless imagination. Chef Uechi’s menu boasts a plethora of inventive sushi and Robata grilled dishes (seafood, meat, poultry and vegetables, all prepared in the restaurant’s central Robata Bar) that are veritable works of art in themselves – complemented with an extensive list of premier sakes and exotic cocktails.

Katsuya combines the service and quality of a fine dining restaurant with the casual vibe and lively energy of a neighborhood hotspot. While fairly intimate in size, accommodating up to 170, the restaurant features a variety of dining experiences – from two levels of dining (with tables as well as several cozy booths), outdoor terrace seating, a sushi bar, Robata Bar and a separate lounge-like dining room. The Robata Bar, anchored in the center of the restaurant, is named for the traditional small-fire grilling popular in northern Japan. Considered by Starck as a veritable “temple” to the art of Japanese cuisine, the Robata Bar symbolizes the importance and celebration of the meal preparation process – truly theater in itself.

For the Katsuya menu, chef Uechi has created a unique and varied selection of inventive sushi and non-sushi dishes including delicate tempura, succulent warm and cold Japanese main courses (some traditional, some distinctly Katsuya creations), and an array of grilled selections from the Robata Bar. Longtime fans of Uechi will enjoy his signature classics such as *Crispy Rice with Spicy Tuna*, *Yellowtail Sashimi with Jalapeño* and *Spicy Albacore Sashimi with Crispy Onion*. As testament to the attention to detail in creating Katsuya, each dish is presented to diners on a different type of plate, the result of careful research throughout Japan to create the most exquisite presentation possible.

Lunch at Katsuya is quickly becoming as popular as dinnertime, with a varied selection of lunch items available throughout the week. The perfect setting for weekday business and “power” lunches, Katsuya offers a host of light, affordable menu items that are both delicious and time-efficient for those on a schedule. On weekends, the restaurant provides the ideal setting for leisurely brunch and small group gatherings.

One of only four Master Sushi Chefs in the Los Angeles area, Uechi brings over three decades of culinary artistry to Katsuya. His original Katsu-Ya sushi bars in Studio City and Encino are consistently rated at the top of the Zagat Guide Los Angeles' lists, earning such raves as simply "heaven" and "as good as sushi gets."

An equally extraordinary element of the Katsuya dining experience is its extensive list of premier sakes as well as a selection of specialty cocktails, created expressly for Katsuya by acclaimed mixologist Ryan Magarian, with exotic names such as *Burning Mandarin*, *Katsuya Fresh* and *Honey Basil Slings*.

While modern in tone, the restaurant features several dramatic nods to the timeless simplicity of Japanese design. Giant granite boulders, etched with the Japanese character, or *kanji* for "Katsuya," are topped with flames to flank the restaurant's all-glass exterior façade and teak terrace, and are also used as vessels throughout the dining room to hold chilled sake, like oversized ice buckets. Four large black Noren curtains surround the Robata Bar, again featuring the Katsuya *kanji* symbol.

The restaurant's wooden interiors are punctuated with oversized, glowing, beautifully shot photographs of a Japanese woman – her eyes, her lips, a hand, a tattoo – which add a provocative, decidedly sexy feel to the space. Many of the tabletops and both bars are also lit from underneath, adding a beautiful glow to the room. A separate dining room, enveloped in dark wooden walls adorned with ornate Venetian mirrors, is located adjacent to the main dining room, offering a cozy, seductive vibe and providing patrons with a place to dine, drink or socialize. Other mischievous, supremely Starck touches that add to the magic and mystery of the space include mirrors in the restrooms which reveal 'hidden' images on closer inspection.

Commented Starck, "Katsuya Uechi understands better than anyone the magic of Japanese cuisine and honors the very essence of each ingredient. For the restaurant's design, I wanted to evoke both the spiritual, humble simplicity of this culture as well as its flesh and humanity."

The Brentwood restaurant is the first of several Katsuyas slated to open in the next few years, including additional locations in Hollywood, downtown Los Angeles and Miami's South Beach. The initial Katsuya, located at 11777 San Vicente Boulevard in Brentwood, is currently open weekdays for lunch from 11:30am – 2:30pm, and for dinner Sunday through Thursday from 5:30 to 11:00pm, and Friday and Saturday from 5:30 to 12:00am. Katsuya is also open for lunch on weekends and serves a limited afternoon "small bites" menu daily from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Reservations and more information can be had by calling 310-207-8744, or visiting <http://www.sbeent.com/katsuya>.

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ABOUT KATSUYA UECHI

As one of only four Master Sushi Chefs in Los Angeles, Chef Uechi brings over three decades of culinary artistry and restaurant operation experience to the SBE team. Known for his distinctive style and first-rate execution of high quality traditional sushi, Uechi is recognized as one of the major style setters in the sushi world and was recently named "Chef of the Year" by Angelino Magazine. Recently tied for #1 ranking for Top Food in the 2006 Zagat Los Angeles guide, his namesake locations Sushi Katsuya in Studio City and Encino are consistently acknowledged as two of L.A.'s top restaurants and the newly-opened joint venture with SBERG, Katsuya in Brentwood, has already received rave reviews. Chef Uechi has owned and operated numerous restaurants over his expansive and successful career. In addition, he applied his talents as a consultant to the celebrated Hollywood hot spot, Koi. Born in Japan, Uechi was raised by parents active in the restaurant business. Developing a love for the business as a youth, he went on to hone his skills in kitchens of Okinawa at the Harbor View Hotel, Kappo Yama Kawa and Hotel Rainbow. Upon arriving in the United States, Uechi served as Executive Chef at Tatsumo (Seattle), Kabuki Sushi and Seaward Sushi.

ABOUT PHILIPPE STARCK

Philippe Starck is widely recognized as the world's leading designer of luxury restaurant, hotel and real estate properties and has established a global following of clients and devotees. Born in Paris, M. Starck developed his eclectic style at a young age and studied his trade at *Ecole Nissim de Camondo*. In 1979, he created Starck Products, where he introduced fun and stylish designs into everyday products. Several of Starck's masterful creations are exhibited at the most prestigious museums around the world including Paris, New York, London and Barcelona. Recognized as one of the world's most powerful style makers, his extensive resume of world-class hotel destinations includes *Felix restaurant at The Peninsula Hotel* in Hong Kong, the *Mondrian* in Los Angeles, *Delano* in Miami's South Beach and the *Teatron* in Mexico. Starck has received numerous accolades throughout his career such as Grand Prix for Design, the Oscar of the design world, the Officier des Arts et Lettres and many more. Additional information on Philippe Starck can be found at www.starck.com.

ABOUT SBE RESTAURANT GROUP

SBE Restaurant Group (SBERG) integrates revolutionary design, world-class chefs, the nation's top mixologists and highly personalized service into flawless destination restaurants, lounges and nightclubs that draw a sophisticated and loyal clientele. Based in Los Angeles, the organization is a key operating unit within SBE Entertainment Group. With entrepreneurial insight and a keen eye for taste making style, the SBERG team not only stays ahead of the curve, but hones its intensity and focus by constantly creating and reinventing new destinations for SBE's A-list clientele.

To forward SBERG's creative and corporate aims, world-renowned designer Philippe Starck joined forces with the organization in 2005 to develop restaurant concepts in Southern California and beyond. Under this exclusive agreement, SBERG's first Starck-designed property, *Katsuya*, opened to rave reviews in Brentwood in June 2006. Another gem in the SBERG restaurant portfolio is the West Hollywood icon, *The Abbey Food & Bar*.

In Los Angeles nightlife, no other organization comes close to the offerings and influence of SBERG's roster of nightclubs and lounges. In addition to actors with box office bankability, record-breaking pro athletes, top-dollar supermodels, and rock royalty, SBERG counts headline-making executives, socialites and artists among its dedicated guests. Currently, SBERG operates three destinations favored among entertainment insiders and Los Angeles culturati: the high-wattage nightspots Privilege, The Lobby, and Hyde Lounge. The company's popular Prey nightclub will reopen in September 2006 as Area, with an entirely new Mid-Century Modern design.