



## SECCO WINE BAR – 2933 W. CARY STREET

*A new breed of wine bar comes to Carytown*

**Richmond, VA, April, 2010** – The folks at River City Cellars, Carytown's time-honored destination for all things delicious, are pleased to announce the opening of their first full-service restaurant with Secco Wine Bar, a European-style eatery for exceptional everyday dining. The restaurant's "concept" sounds awfully simple on paper but, in practice, translates into a bit of an anomaly in the Richmond restaurant scene. In short, Secco seeks to provide the community with a cool yet casual atmosphere where they can gather on a regular basis (read: not expensive) to enjoy some really amazing food and drink. Think "Cheers" but for foodies, where Woody, equally handsome and considerably less dumb, is prone to wax-poetic on *terroir*, triple crème cheeses or Belgian ales. A place where everybody knows your name but, more importantly, knows what you're drinking.

Secco is situated on the corner of West Cary and Sheppard, next door to River City Cellars. Two walls of floor-to-ceiling windows make for bright and cheery lunches and brunches and perhaps the best people-watching this city has to offer (seriously, sometimes it's hard to get anything done around here). The interior design is a triumph of creativity, resourcefulness and the noble art of frugality. 1,000 little end pieces of wood framing were salvaged by designer Tom Brickman, then meticulously cut, stained and shaped into a textured design that covers a custom-built bar and the rear wall of the dining room. Behind the bar, a mural by artist Chris Milk pays homage to, and changes with, the seasons. Elsewhere the interior is all about warmth and simplicity—exposed filament bulbs dangle above a rustic cork bar top, a wall primed with chalkboard paint displays the day's specials or featured wine region—with everything presented in a palette of rose, copper and black. And wood, lots of wood.

Part of Secco's mission is to dispel the somewhat unsavory impression most Americans have of wine bars: No stingy pours of supermarket-grade vino with shocking markups. No staring at your bill thinking "did I eat those olives or put them through college?" No after-dinner beelines to the nearest pizza joint, wondering aloud if "tapas" is Spanish for "\$60 lighter and still hungry."

For starters, Secco's wine list is a veritable "best of" among the producers River City Cellars has been championing for the last 11 years. The practice of knowing wine from the vine to the glass and forging long-term relationships with beloved winemakers has culminated in a selection of artisanal, small production and just darned delicious wines that you'd be hard pressed to find anywhere else. And certainly not at this price: of the more than two dozen by-the-glass offerings, only a handful are priced above \$10, with more than half available for \$6 or less, allowing our guests to discover the best kept secrets of Spain, Italy and France for what they would normally pay for a pint of domestic beer.

And speaking of beer, Secco will be home to a rotating selection of amazing hand-crafted lagers and ales, lovingly compiled by our resident beer geeks. From undeservedly obscure breweries like Sunner, Hitachino, Full Sail and St. Feuillien to limited releases from local legends like...well, Legend, Secco will always have something tasty and unique on tap.

All these flowing potables are anchored by a menu where fresh seasonal ingredients, farmstead cheeses and house made pasta and charcuterie are incorporated into an array of excellent antipasti, sandwiches, soups, salads and small plates. As with the beverage menu, proteins and produce are sourced almost exclusively from family-owned farms, favoring local producers whenever possible and avoiding factory farms like the plague. Executive Chef Tim Bereika's impressive resume includes a stint working and studying in Florence, Italy where, among other things, he honed the skills needed to churn out authentic European charcuterie, as evidenced in Secco's selection of house-made terrines and pâtés. An array of artisanal cheeses from River City Cellars' revered program spans the globe from A(Isace, France) to Z(amora, Spain) and runs the gamut from light, bright and fresh to creamy, decadent and downright stinky. Seasonal soups and salads provide a tasty prelude to the perfect meal (like the **Purée of Cauliflower with Browned Butter and domestic Paddlefish Caviar** or the **Local Field Greens Salad with Chèvre, Toasted Pistachios and Lemon-Thyme Vinaigrette**) or, in some cases, eat like a meal themselves (like the **Passatelli in Brodo with Chorizo and Mustard Greens** or a salad of **Duck Confit, Arugula and Blue de Causses with Walnut-Dijon Dressing**).

Secco's lunch menu is centered around a selection of bocadillos and pressed panini made from a thoughtful selection of meats, cheeses and produce. Soon-to-be-signature sandwiches include a hearty **Heritage Pork Confit with Kumquat Preserves and Valdeon Blue**; a healthy **Braised Fennel, Apple and Fontina d'Aosta with Green Peppercorn Mustard**; and the **Three Cheese (Sara's Choice)**, which is basically the kind of grilled cheese you would have eaten as a kid if your parents owned a *fromagerie* in Paris and really, really loved you....yeah, me neither.

But it's at dinner service when Chef Bereika really lets his foodie flag fly, with an array of composed small plates showcasing exceptional ingredients and inventive flavor combinations. Stand-outs include the **Harissa-marinated Octopus with Guacamole and Pickled Red Onion**; a lovely concoction of **Fava Beans, Fresh Ricotta, Roasted Pecans and Sea Salt**; the shockingly light **Gorgonzola-stuffed Fried Castelvetro Olives**; a heavenly **Tartare of Spanish Mackerel with Poached Garlic, Piquillo Peppers and Capers**; and the robust house-made **Mint Cannelloni stuffed with Braised Lamb Shoulder** to name just a few. Desserts are also made in-house, including the delicious **White Chocolate Bark with Candied Black Olives**, a delicate **Olive Oil Cake with Lavender, Vanilla and Almonds**; and a decadent **Catalonian Bread Pudding with Caramel Sauce and Sea Salt**.

Still, the secret to Secco's success (knock on re-purposed wood) will be its staff: a small, tightly-knit group with a passion for food and drink that borders on obsession. When they're not preparing and serving it, they're studying it, talking it, writing it, and more or less living it. They are brewing beer, growing vegetables, milking goats and risking their freedom to smuggle contraband cheese over the border. What's more, it's a staff whose knowledge and experience is rivaled only by their wit and warmth.

In other words: You want to know the ins and outs of your Rioja? We've got you covered.

Need to vent about your work week? Got you there too.

Just let us top you off and we're all ears.

Secco is...

Julia Battaglini – Owner...Tom Brickman – Designer/Owner...Tim Bereika – Executive Chef

Monday – Thursday 11:00am to 9:00pm; Saturday – Sunday 11:00am – 10:00pm.

Soups, salads, antipasti, cheese and charcuterie are served throughout the day.

Sandwiches available 11:00 PM – 5:00 PM and small plates 5:00 PM - close.

For more information about Secco, please contact:

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[www.seccowinebar.com](http://www.seccowinebar.com)