**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Press Contact: Leeann @**[foodanddrinkny@gmail.com](mailto:foodanddrinkny@gmail.com)

Donna @[donnausti@yahoo.com](mailto:donnausti@yahoo.com)

**CEQ Italia and QvExtra! International Join Forces to Raise the Quality and Awareness of Fine European Olive Oil**

Most Americans already love extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) for its flavor and versatility. But not all of them are aware of the range of flavors and quality that extra virgin olive oils can possess, based on how its produced and stored, the varietal of olives or where it originates. They may not know how to distinguish the best quality extra virgin olive oils (especially in an ordinary grocery store) or the best way to cook with it. And above all, they may not know what they are missing.

Two non-profit consortia, passionately dedicated to raising the standards of extra virgin olive oil produced in Spain and Italy respectively, **QVExtra! International and CEQ Italia**, have joined forces in a special campaign to share this knowledge with chefs and consumers in the U.S. **Spain** and **Italy**—two of the best-known producers of high-quality extra virgin olive oil—share a vast storehouse of knowledge about what makes great olive oil, and how to make it even better. The initiative is financed with aid from the **European Union**, which supports ventures that promote high quality agricultural products. The friendly competition between members of the European Union and the producers, pushes all members to continue to improve and raise their standards. As part of their mission, they also educate culinary professionals and consumers about production and authenticity through a series of lectures, demonstrations and tastings.

This year, in a series of seminars in **Boston, Providence,** and **New York,** olive oil expert**s** from the EU will discuss production methods and standards, benefits and the role of extra virgin olive oil in the Mediterranean diet, key elements in determining quality, how terroir influences flavor profiles, and how to cook with EVOO. Depending on the variety, the extra virgin olive oil has its own distinct character – fruity or aromatic, sweet or bitter, with differing intensity of the spicy aftertaste. These extra virgin olive oils all have their own nuances, contrasts and flavors, but what they have in common is that their production has been closely controlled – from the flower to the bottle – with the main aim of providing the highest possible quality. Expert growers and brands are: **Alfonso Fernández López** from Spain, **Natalia Ravida** from Italy, and **Luigi Caricato**, oleologist, journalist and director of OOF international magazine.

There will also be cooking demonstrations as part of these seminars: Italian American Chef Marisa Iocco; Marisa Iocco’s “doing more with less” approach—emphasized by fresh, seasonal ingredients showcasing her Italian culinary techniques—has distinguished her as one of the country’s foremost proponents of authentic yet playful cucina Italiana. Marisa has consulted for a constellation of restaurant owners in addition to running her own successful eateries: Esquire magazine named both her La Bettola and Mare of one of the “Top Ten Restaurants in America,” while Conde Nast Traveler named Mare “One of the Top 80 Places in the World to Eat.” Her work has been honored by the Accademia Cucina Italiana (named one of the best Italian chefs in America). In October 2017, she received the award for “Distinguished Culinary Arts.” Her menu mastery dazzles at Spiga restaurant where she is executive chef and owner. Chef Marisa’s first book is “Every Menu is a Love Story - Ecco Perché Amore.”

Also cooking is Córdoba’s premier chef, Periko Ortega. He & his dining destination restaurant ReComiendo, are multi award-winners, named one of the six best restaurants in Spain by the Travelers Choice Award and ranked one of the 25 best in the world, according to the Travelers Choice awards of Tripadvisor, as well as a Gold Medal for Excellence winner. Ortega has collaborated on several haute cuisine books, including Córdoba on the Table, Flowers and Flavors of Andalusia.

The seminars will be interactive: culinary students and industry professionals will have the opportunity to taste different EVOOs, taste dishes that the chefs prepare, and ask questions. Activities for attendees will include developing, implementing and discussing their own recipes. In addition, they will be asked to complete a true/false questionnaire to evaluate their knowledge of basic facts before and after the training.

The seminars will be held at leading Culinary Schools. In some locations, the agenda will include a special dinner.

**Eataly - Boston**

**ADDRESS:** Prudential Center, 800 Boylston St, Boston, MA 02199, Level 1-L3

**In-Store Promotion and Tasting**: Monday, December 9th, 4:30 pm

**CAMBRIDGE CENTER FOR ADULT EDUCATION**

The acclaimed cooking classes in the Cambridge Center take place in the fully-equipped kitchen. The hands-on classes, demonstrations, & tastings allow students to learn cuisines from around the world with professionally trained instructors, and unforgettable cooking & learning experiences with celebrated chefs.

**ADDRESS:** 42 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA 02138

**SEMINAR:**  Tuesday, December 10, 2 pm to 4 pm

**JOHNSON AND WALES (JWU)**

Johnson & Wales University (JWU) is an American private, nonprofit, co-educational, career-oriented university with four campuses spread across the United States. [Providence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Providence,_Rhode_Island), [Rhode Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhode_Island), is home to JWU's first, largest, and main campus.  <https://www.jwu.edu/academics/colleges/college-of-culinary-arts.html>

**ADDRESS:**  8 Abbott Park Place, Providence RI 02903

**SEMINAR #1**: Thursday, December 12, 11:30 am to 12:45 pm (sharp)

**SEMINAR #2:** Thursday, December 12, 1:45 pm to 3 pm

**Dinner:** Wednesday, December 11, at I[lona Restaurant](http://www.ilonasouthend.com/), 783 Tremont Street, Boston MA 02118 (for media and influencers)

**INTERNATIONAL CULINARY CENTER (ICC)**

Formerly known as The French Culinary Institute, the International Culinary Center is a global leader in professional culinary, pastry and wine education. ICC’s mission is to train the next generation of culinary leaders and innovators, providing them with the credentials, confidence and connections to succeed in the food & wine industry. [ICC](https://www.internationalculinarycenter.com/?utm_source=evoo-consortium&utm_medium=pr&utm_campaign=olive-oil-dinner)

**ADDRESS:**462 Broadway NY, NY 10013 (Between Broadway and Spring Street)

**SEMINAR:**  Friday, December 13th from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm

Open to students, food journalists and bloggers

**DINNER:** Friday, December 13th:  7:30pm

ICC dining room, Second Floor, featuring an open kitchen

**CEQ Italia,** Consorzio di garanzia dell'olio extra vergine di oliva di qualità, <http://ceqitalia.com/it/>, promotes the culture of Italian extra virgin olive oil, guaranteeing quality by supporting initiatives and programs which advance research and quality improvement. They maintain that quality can only be guaranteed where there is close cooperation between producers, bottlers, distributors and retailers and careful monitoring by independent experts and laboratories, including compliance with consortium procedures, checks on quality and authenticity, traceability and documentation. Members adhere to strict guidelines to maintain their standing in the consortium. In addition, the consortium provides transparent and objective connection concerning the relationship between quality and price, that can be clearly explained to the consumer.

**QVExtra! International,** <http://www.qvextra.es/>, is a private non-profit organization whose aim is to promote competitiveness among producers of Spanish extra virgin olive oil, thus fostering a quality culture among its members and making this known to the consumer.QvExtra! olive oils are top of the range, rich, fruity, tangy and of exceptional quality. QvExtra! awards an international seal of quality for extra virgin olive oil which meets all the chemical, physical and sensorial requirements agreed by the association. The quality requirements are even stricter than those established by the current legislation. QvExtra! currently has over 50 brands of extra virgin olive oil.

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