



**For photos, interviews, etc. contact:**  
Terence Keane, Director of Public Relations  
510.647.2917, [tkeane@berkeleyrep.org](mailto:tkeane@berkeleyrep.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **BERKELEY REP'S NARSAI TOAST BREAKS HALF-MILLION MARK**

**Annual gala featuring celebrity chefs and California's finest wines raises a record \$542,000**

APRIL 20, 2007 – Tonight, at the end of Berkeley Repertory Theatre's annual gala, more than 400 satisfied guests raised their glasses to celebrate the news: for its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the **Narsai Toast** raised a record-breaking \$542,000. That means the gourmet gala and wine auction held at the Ritz Carlton in San Francisco has now generated an incredible \$3.5 million to support this Tony Award-winning theatre.

Not only did these philanthropic gourmands dine on five exquisite courses prepared by Michelin star-rated chefs. Not only did they savor a prestigious selection of Northern California's finest wines, and outbid one another for vintage wine and culinary adventures. In a return to the event's roots, they laughed and laughed and laughed...

Fifteen years ago, the Toast began as a friendly roast of local culinary expert **Narsai David**. This year, **Rita Moreno** and **Geoff Hoyle** – two extraordinary talents often seen on Berkeley Rep's stage – gave a hilarious tribute to **Tony Taccone** to celebrate his tenth year as the Theatre's artistic director.

"I can't believe it was 15 years ago when I was subjected to some gentle ribbing at our first gourmet gala," **David remarked**. "It was a great night with some legendary chefs – and I'm delighted that another exceptional team has created a magical meal for us this evening. I have been involved with Berkeley Rep since its beginnings on College Avenue and have witnessed its remarkable growth over the past four decades. I'm proud that the proceeds from tonight's event will not only sustain the work on Berkeley Rep's stages, but support its extraordinary education programs as well, bringing the arts to youth in our community."

Over the past 15 years, the **Narsai Toast** has become the epitome of gastronomic excellence showcasing the talents of the country's leading chefs and thrilling the palates of local culinary connoisseurs. In previous years, the Toast has presented the cuisine of celebrated chefs such as **Traci Des Jardins, Thomas Keller, Paul Prudhomme, Wolfgang Puck, Jeremiah Tower, and Charlie Trotter**.

This year's event featured a delectable menu prepared by an incredible team:

- **Hors d'oeuvres by Jean-Pierre Dubray of the Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco**  
such as White Asparagus with Crème Fraiche and Caviar or Seared Dayboat Scallops on Minted Pea Puree – served with the 2000 Gloria Ferrer Royal Cuvée, 2005 Raymond Vineyard Napa Valley Reserve Chardonnay, and 2004 Chappellet Winery Merlot
- **First course by Ron Boyd of Aqua**  
White Tuna Carpaccio with Black Olive Croutons, Fava Beans and Cherry Tomatoes paired with the 2005 Caymus Vineyards Conundrum
- **Second course by Michael Mina of Michael Mina**  
Amish Chicken Breast with Truffled Mac & Cheese and Caramelized Onion Sauce paired with the 2004 Gail Ann's Vineyard Chardonnay from Russian Hill Estate Winery

(MORE)

1997 tony award for outstanding regional theatre / a nonprofit corporation since 1968

- **Entrée by Suzette Gresham of Acquerello**  
Tenderloin of Beef under a Corona of Spinach and Prosciutto with Fried Herbs served with the 2001 Napa Valley Narsai Cabernet Sauvignon and the 2003 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon from Neal Family Vineyards
- **Dessert by Jacques Torres of Jacques Torres Chocolate**  
The Jacques Torres Chocolate Fountain with Raspberries in Phyllo paired with the 2005 Essensia, an Orange Muscat Dessert Wine from Quady Winery

**Auction** winners went home with a priceless array of wines from private collections and Northern California vineyards, as well as several extraordinary **culinary adventures**: a seven-night trip to Provence for ten guests, including accommodations at L'Ancienne Poste; a four-night stay at Exclusive Resorts, including a *bon voyage* dinner at the chef's table at One Market; dinner for ten prepared by **Jan Birnbaum** at Stony Hill Vineyard, hosted by **Willinda and Peter McCrea**; dinner for ten at the home of **Narsai and Venus David**, including wine selected from their private cellar; a day at the estate of **Pat Kuleto** with lunch for ten prepared by Birnbaum and **Janelle Weaver**; dinner for eight at Bay Wolf with **Richard Reich**; and more.

As one of the founders of California cuisine, Bay Area gourmand **Narsai David** has helped elevate the region's cultural profile. He founded the highly successful restaurant and market Narsai's in Kensington. Currently, he serves as food and wine editor for KCBS-AM, filing daily reports from his travels around the world. Wherever he goes, his objective remains the same: to share the simple pleasures of cooking through education. In 1977, Helen Barber first harnessed David's boundless energy for the good of Berkeley Rep when she invited him to join the Theatre's founding board. The rest, as they say, is history. From loaning his restaurant's dishes to the prop shop to serving on the architectural review committee for the Theatre's Addison Street home, he has tirelessly given his time, energy, and wisdom to improving Berkeley Rep and making it an invaluable part of the Bay Area community.

The 2007 Narsai Toast was supported by lead sponsor Fossil and two **event sponsors**: KCBS All News Radio 740 and the Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco. This year's event was chaired by Becky Bleich, Rich Edwards, and Wayne Wilson and made possible, in part, by the generosity of Citigroup Private Bank; DFS Group, Ltd; the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trusts; Rick Hoskins and Lynne Frame; Jefferies and Company, Inc.; Macy's; Merrill Lynch Private Banking and Investment Group; Meyer Sound; the Roda Group; and Wells Fargo. Sponsors also included Foley & Lardner LLP, Goldman Sachs, Mary and Nicholas Graves, Wayne Jordan and Quinn Delaney, Sarah McArthur and Michael LeValley, the Mechanics Bank, Mary Ann and Lou Peoples, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP, the Pratt/Bleich family, Marjorie Randolph, Michael and Sue Steinberg, and Felicia Woytak and Steve Rasmussen.

All **proceeds from the Narsai Toast** support Berkeley Rep's mission to set a national standard for ambitious programming, engagement of its audiences, and leadership within the community.

#### **ABOUT BERKELEY REP**

Founded in 1968, the Tony Award-winning Berkeley Repertory Theatre has established a national reputation for its ambitious programming and dynamic productions. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Tony Taccone and Managing Director Susan Medak, Berkeley Rep seeks to engage its audience in an ongoing dialogue of ideas. Through its bold choice of material and vivid style of production, Berkeley Rep reflects a commitment to diversity, excitement, and quality. The company is especially well known for its presentations of important new dramatic voices and its fresh adaptations of seldom-seen classics. In 2001, Berkeley Rep opened the Roda Theatre, a 600-seat proscenium theatre that complements the 400-seat Thrust Stage, and the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, housed in the Nevo Education Center. The addition of these two buildings has transformed what was once a single stage into a vital and versatile performing arts complex.

###