

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Jill Highsmith
(919) 787-3505

Angus Barn's Van Eure wins food industry's highest honor as restaurant enters 44th year

***Acclaimed owner of The Angus Barn, one of the nations' top-ten steak
houses, salutes outstanding staff***

(Raleigh, North Carolina, June 4, 2004...) Van Eure, owner and heart and soul of the nationally renowned Angus Barn Restaurant, was just awarded The 2004 Gold Plate, the food industry's highest honor, and named 2004 Foodservice Operator of the Year by the International Foodservice Manufacturers Association.

Eure, who is a fixture at the Angus Barn, received the award at the organization's 50th annual Gold & Silver Plate Celebration at the end of May in Chicago.

The award is especially meaningful for Eure, who took over the management of the Raleigh landmark after the death of her father, Thad Eure Jr. in 1988. In the early 1980s, Mr. Eure was a recipient of the IFMA's Silver Plate Award.

Eure accepted the Gold Plate Award on behalf of her staff, whom she invited to the stage to stand behind her as she spoke. "I couldn't be prouder of these people you see behind me," Eure said. "This award belongs to them." Also with her on stage were her husband, Steve Thanhauser, and their children.

At the presentation, Eure shared how touched she was to carry on the legacy of her father and mother. “I never thought I’d be standing in the same place my father stood with all of you, all those years ago. But I know my father is here with me today.”

Eure can regularly be found at the Angus Barn, talking with guests, working with her staff and making sure the world-famous eatery continues to run smoothly and at the same standard of excellence that has made the restaurant a favorite for generations of North Carolinians and their guests.

“This is and will continue to be my life’s work,” said Eure. “Many things have changed in our great state over the past 20 years,” she added. “But our customers can rest assured that The Angus Barn’s standards of excellence, and my involvement here, will always be present.”

Eure and her strong management team have created a unique dining experience at The Angus Barn that she refers to as “rustic elegance” – fine dining service in a unique barn setting. Under Eure’s guidance, The Angus Barn menu has evolved from traditional, award-winning steak to include regional dishes, pasta, seafood and specialties appealing to vegetarians and the health conscious.

In addition, she goes to great lengths to make sure all food products are the highest quality, including fresh lobster tails from Australia; giant shrimp from Panama; farm-raised pork from Minnesota; and certified Angus beef from Kansas. Eure is a proponent of serving only menu items that are raised and killed humanely. In fact, she spent two days with a Kansas beef supplier to guarantee that the slaughtering was executed humanely.

Eure was chosen as the Gold Plate recipient by secret ballot from among nine Silver Plate Award winners who were elected in February by a jury of chief trade press editors and past Gold & Silver Plate Award winners in nine categories of operations. The Silver Plate Awards are the foodservice industry’s highest operator recognition of innovation, dedication, leadership and extraordinary contributions to the foodservice community.

To further ensure food quality, Eure empowers her employees at all levels, from the butcher to the server, to stop the preparation or service of a product without supervisor approval if it does not meet guest standards. In addition, many employees are

ServSafe certified, and the goal is to have a full 100 percent kitchen staff certified within one year.

The Angus Barn consistently enhances its menu according to customer desires. Twice a year, random customers and employees are asked to taste and evaluate items for consistency, quality and presentation as part of a menu evaluation. Eure recently sent two managers to a training program on menu design, which led to a redesigned, more customer-friendly menu.

Eure and the Angus Barn have won numerous awards for excellence. The Angus Barn's wine cellar program was recognized with the coveted *Wine Spectator's* Grand Award in 1989. *Nation's Restaurant News* has placed The Angus Barn in the Fine Dining Hall of Fame, and *Restaurants and Institutions* awarded Eure and The Angus Barn the prestigious Ivy Award. Eure and The Angus Barn also received the DiRoNa (Distinguished Restaurants of North America) Award for achieving the highest possible standards in all aspects of distinguished dining.

Eure's restaurant mission is "making memories by recognizing and appreciating the fact that each guest is the most important person in the world while at The Angus Barn." This mission is met with three main values: integrity, teamwork and excellence. Both the mission statement and values were designed by the management team and approved by the staff. Each applicant is scored on timeliness, appearance, professionalism, friendliness, and how they interact with the employee who interviews them. Eure has developed a specific training program for each position within the restaurant. In addition to this intensive individual training, each employee is required to cross-train in all other departments within the restaurant to gain a complete understanding of the entire restaurant operation.

Eure creates an environment that has led to an employee retention that is unheard of in the industry. All complimentary guest letters are publicly posted, and Eure sends a personal note to employees' homes congratulating them on guest recognition. She empowers her employees with the "20 Foot Rule" – any employee within the restaurant who may be within 20 feet of a problem, a challenge, or opportunity should assist in solving that problem.

Each year, Eure hosts an annual employee banquet, where she presents her trainers' awards, achievement awards, and "People's Choice" awards, which are selected by her employees. Among her approximate 220 employees, about 25 percent of her staff is recognized with 10-plus years of service. Recently, her first employee retired after 43 years of service. In an industry where restaurateurs regularly battle turnover issues, Eure's employees have made lifelong careers with The Angus Barn.

Eure develops her staff and provides opportunities by promoting internally for management positions. Even if employees decide to leave The Angus Barn, Eure supports them by making industry contacts and writing letters of recommendation. She continuously supports the restaurant industry by developing national and international intern programs and opening her restaurant to students from such schools as the Culinary Institute of America, Johnson & Wales University, and the local school, Wake Technical College.

Eure's financial and operational management techniques result in outstanding quality control, and she includes her entire management team in the process. Eure involves her staff to get feedback, and monthly management meetings are held to follow up on the restaurant's goals for improving food costs, health department scores, customer counts, retention levels and profits. She requires her department managers to maintain zero overtime labor charges. All her employees are cross-trained to maintain operational stability. In addition, she recently received a local grant for her efforts in working toward a goal of 100 percent solid waste recycling.

Eure is a leader in marketing and merchandising as well. She has developed a creative, innovative country store in which she sells unique food products and souvenirs from The Angus Barn. She ships her cheese spread in old-fashioned crocks across the country. The Angus Barn carries its own private-label wine for purchase. The Angus Barn web site offers an online gift shop where customers can order their favorite products and have them shipped anywhere in the world. All web site inquiries are guaranteed a response within 24 hours. With each order, a customer service representative calls the individual to ensure delivery.

Eure believes that the best use of her advertising dollars is to promote extras for her customers by going above and beyond their expectations. For instance, she provides a

lemon pound cake for birthday celebrations, balloons, apples, postcards, cloth calendars, and newsletters announcing upcoming special events.

Eure is exceptionally active both in the foodservice industry and in her community. In 2003, the National Restaurant Association presented her with the Cornerstone Humanitarian Award, which honors humanitarians and community activists as examples to inspire other restaurant operators. The National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation recently inducted her into the NRA Educational Foundation's College of Diplomates.

Eure serves on the National Restaurant Association Board of Directors and also is a member of the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Restaurant Association. She was elected to the National Restaurant Association Board in 1993 and has held numerous leadership positions on that Board since then.

She brought positive recognition to the restaurant industry when she participated in President Bush's Economic forum in Waco, Texas in 2002. In addition, she was broadcast nationally when "48 Hours" chose The Angus Barn to represent an example of good customer service.

Eure puts on the annual Thad and Alice Eure Walk for Hope at The Angus Barn, which has raised more than \$1.3 million to fund research for mental illness. She also was one of the early supporters of the Interfaith Food Shuttle and has raised money for numerous local charities including the Food Bank of North Carolina and the Frankie Lemmon Center for Children with disabilities.

IFMA is a leading trade association comprising 550 of the world's most prestigious food, equipment and supply manufacturers in the foodservice industry, as well as related marketing service organizations, foodservice trade publications, distributors and brokers. IFMA's mission is to shape the future of foodservice by creating an environment for positive change and actionable solutions benefiting manufacturers and their foodservice channel partners. IFMA and its members serve the \$430 billion food-away-from-home market. IFMA is the only broad-based, total-industry trade association fulfilling the educational, governmental, public relations, marketing research and customer relations needs of its members.

Editor's Note:

For a photo of Van Eure winning the Gold Plate Award, contact Glenna Musante at (919) 782-2360 Ext. 126