

News

From the U.S.- Baltic Foundation

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March 24, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Internationally renowned Latvian chef, Martins Ritins, to prepare menu and attend 2008 U.S.-Baltic Gala

WASHINGTON, DC – Gala Committee Chairman Maria Kivisild Ogrydziak announced on Monday that internationally acclaimed chef **Martins Ritins**, Director of *Vincent's Restaurant* in Riga, Latvia and President of Slow Food Latvia, will create the menu and oversee the meal's preparation for the 2008 dinner and gala of the U.S.-Baltic Foundation (USBF).

Since 1990, the Foundation has served as an education resource for policy makers in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the United States. It has developed and implemented programs to strengthen democracy and free markets in those nations, and introduced Baltic political, educational, and industrial leaders to new American audiences with a series of public affairs programs.

The 2008 U.S.-Baltic Gala awards dinner and silent auction will be held on April 19, at the Renaissance Mayflower Hotel, 1127 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC, the sixth annual fundraising dinner that USBF has organized.

Since beginning his career in 1971, Mr. Ritins has worked in and owned restaurants in Canada, Jamaica, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, the United States and Latvia. Among his prominent guests have been President George W. Bush, Queen Elizabeth II, and Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko of Japan. Mr. Ritins prepared meals for the heads of states and governments at the NATO Summit in Riga in November, 2006.

Since 2004 Mr. Ritins has been the President of Slow Food Latvia, which is a branch of Slow Food International, a non-profit organization founded in 1989, and which has more than 80,000 members worldwide. The mission of Slow Food International is to defend biodiversity in our food supply, spread taste education and connect producers of excellent foods with co-producers through events and initiatives.

Mr. Ritins will be in Washington, DC from Wednesday April 15 to April 21. He will be available for media appearances and interviews each morning from 8:00 until noon. To schedule an interview, please contact USBF Office Manager Trevor Dane at 202-785-5056 or by email at Trevor@usbaltic.org.