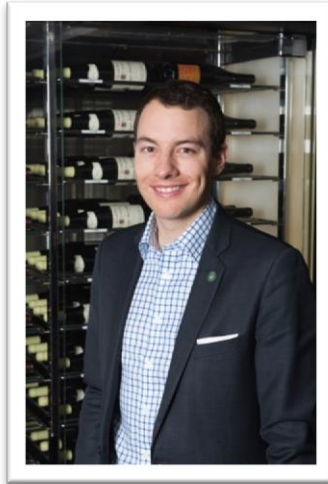




For more information, please contact:
May Selby, public relations, 970.544.6269
mselectby@thelittlenell.com



CHRIS DUNAWAY - ASPEN'S NEWEST ADVANCED SOMMELIER

Aspen, Colo. (Aug. 1, 2016) - Another sommelier at The Little Nell has risen the ranks. Chris Dunaway, Head Sommelier at element 47, passed the grueling Advanced Sommelier exam, held in Phoenix in July.

Chris arrived in Aspen in late 2015 by way of New York City. During his five-year run in Manhattan, he worked for some of the most respected professionals in the food and wine industry including celebrity chef Daniel Boulud. Prior to entering the hospitality field, Chris was born, raised and studied in Kentucky. He grew up in a small farming town where he was exposed to the joy of dining at frequent gatherings with his family at large. These were often supplemented with fresh ingredients from his grandparents' garden and even homemade wine at times. "I was fascinated by wine at an early age," Chris contends. "A sentiment forever ingrained as a result of many summer evenings spent walking through my grandfather's grapevines."

He then went on to Transylvania University in Lexington to attain a Bachelor of Arts and shortly afterward began to pursue the path to becoming a sommelier.

The Court of Master Sommeliers was established in the United Kingdom in 1969; in 1977, it was deemed the premier international examining body. Its purpose is to encourage improved standards of beverage knowledge and service in hotels and restaurants with education as the Court's charter.

There are four examination stages to attain the top qualifications of Master Sommelier – Level I (Introductory), Level II (Certified), Level III (Advanced) and Level IV (Master). All candidates must be 21 years of age to participate and all should have been employed in wine service for a minimum of three years, although this is not mandatory to enter the Introductory Course. The Certified Sommelier Examination was created for servers who seek service excellence though may not desire to be a dedicated sommelier or beverage director. The Advanced Sommelier Course was designed to give candidates a template for upper-level examination study and a clear understanding of expectations for passing. Admittance to the Advanced

Course is via a selection process of the Court's academic admissions committee. Chris took this course last year and went on to take the exam this summer, a three-part process held over three days.

For his tests at the Hotel Palomar in Phoenix, Day One was the service exam, which tests practical ability and various scenarios on the floor. Day Two was blind tasting, where candidates have 25 minutes to go through six wines and come up with a conclusion. Day Three was the written theory exam, which covered questions about wine regions all over the world while also including questions about spirits and wine program management. Chris was among 70 candidates who took the exam and the 24 successful people that passed.

“Working at The Little Nell has been an invaluable asset towards preparation,” he explains. Leading up to the exams, “there wasn’t a day that went by when someone from the front of house wasn’t drilling me on questions about cocktails, spirits, sake, or wine. I’m very grateful to be a part of such an amazing team that is so eager about learning and growing together while being so supportive along the way. Additionally, our list and diversity of selections is unlike anything I’ve seen in my career. Having the opportunity to work with it every day has allowed me to work with some of the greatest wines in the world and because Aspen is always bustling with guests eager to experience these wines, it isn’t uncommon to be able to pull corks on some of the more sought-after wines that in the past I was only able to read about.”

To learn more about Chris, [please visit our blog](#) for a Q&A. To celebrate his success, dine with us at element 47 and toast with our just-released cuvée champagne from Bérèche et Fils. This blanc-de-blancs champagne is a third each of Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay and a collaboration with Little Nell Master Sommelier Carlton McCoy and the esteemed champagne house owned and run by the Bérèche family since the mid-19th century.

Images of Chris Dunaway:

<https://aspensnowmass.imagerelay.com/sb/ca6245fe-c014-4e48-996e-18f4a68cb3de>

Images of The Little Nell:

<https://aspensnowmass.imagerelay.com/sb/d671343c-64d8-44dc-930d-a076d5b3b6f7>

About The Little Nell:

Cosmopolitan yet intimate, contemporary yet timeless, The Little Nell invites guests to experience Aspen’s only Forbes Five-Star, AAA Five-Diamond, ski-in/ski-out hotel – a Relais & Châteaux resort. For more information and for reservations, please call 888.The.Nell (888.843.6355) or visit www.thelittlenell.com.

Awards, Accolades and Talent

The Little Nell’s culinary team is led by Executive Chef Matt Zubrod and Executive Sous-Chef Keith Theodore with Patrick Dunn as Chef de Cuisine of element 47, J.D Baldrige as Chef de Cuisine of Ajax Tavern and Curtis Cameron as Executive Pastry Chef. Master Sommelier Carlton McCoy oversees the wine program. Element 47 has been acknowledged with [numerous awards](#) including The Grand Award from Wine Spectator since 1997, recognition as one of America’s 100 Best Wine Restaurants from Wine Enthusiast and a Forbes Five-Star rating in 2015 and 2016.

Social Media:

We invite you to follow The Little Nell on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).