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Balducci's Heads 'Down Under' with Month-Long Celebration of Australia

June's Free Series, in Partnership with the Australian Trade Commission and Tasmanian Tours, to Feature Chef Events, New Products and a Vacation Giveaway for Two to the Island of Tasmania

Bethesda, MD (May 30, 2007)—Ever heard an avocado referred to as an 'avo', tasted fresh Tasmanian honey or traded out your bottle of H2O for sweet rainwater? Next month, Balducci's will make sure you do all three at their month-long celebration of Australia, hosted in partnership with the Australian Trade Commission and Tasmanian Tours.

From June 2-24, all ten Balducci's stores in MD, DC, VA, NY and CT will feature over 50 new products straight from Australia, offer demonstrations and cooking classes with noted Australian Chef Jason Drysdale and offer customers a chance to win a dream vacation for two to Tasmania, the "Island of Inspiration" on Australia's Southeastern coast.

Balducci's has prepared a full calendar of events for each of its stores on Saturdays June 2, June 9, June 16 and June 23, from 11:00am-2:00pm each day. The series will include appearances by "The Aussie Chef" Jason Drysdale, Executive Chef of Norwegian Cruise Lines, as well as demonstrations and tastings of shrimp on the barbie, meat pies and Barramundi fish by Balducci's own team of executive chefs.

"At Balducci's, we are committed to sourcing some of the best and most unique products in the world," noted Balducci's CEO Barbara Parasco. "Australia has an endless number of all natural and delicious products that are quite popular in the US, but not readily available on the East Coast. What better time to celebrate the best of Australia than during the start of summer, when we focus on grilling, lighter fare, fresh fish and crisp wines."

Some of the authentic products showcased over the course of the month will include a selection of jams, cheese spreads and juices from Maggie Beer, one of Australia's most passionate exponents of simple, tasty, quality food; along with some of the finest and most respected Australian imports including: Blue Hills leatherwood honey, Tasmanian Rain bottled rain water, Four'N Twenty meat pies, Dandaragan Estate extra virgin olive oil and Brookfarm all natural macadamia nut muesli. Balducci's will also feature artisanal cheeses, Barramundi fish and crisp Australian wines.

Throughout the month, customers will also have a chance to win a six day/five night dream vacation for two to the island of Tasmania, voted Best Island by the readers of *Travel and Leisure* Magazine, and World's Friendliest Island by the readers of *Condé Nast Traveler*. Starting Saturday, June 2, entry boxes will be posted in each Balducci's store; no purchase is necessary to enter. The final drawing is scheduled for July 30. For more information on Tasmania, visit <http://travelmedia.tourismtasmania.com.au/news/awards.html>

"Australia is already recognized for its full bodied wines; however, many Americans are unfamiliar with our range of unique specialty and gourmet foods. The Australian Trade Commission is excited to partner with Balducci's, a revered brand among food lovers, to introduce a range of delicious, healthy and unusual items straight from Australian purveyors," noted Steven Mandurano, of the Australian Trade Commission.

For more information, or to find a Balducci's near you, please visit www.balduccis.com.

Balducci's Food Lover's Market is one of the largest specialty food companies in the country, with 10 stores and 4 restaurants, and a heritage that dates back to 1916. Formerly operating under the names Hay Day Country Farm Market, Sutton Place Gourmet and Balducci's, the company was purchased in November 2003 by an investment group led by Bear Stearns Merchant Banking. The Balducci's flagship store on 8th Avenue in Manhattan opened in December 2005. For more information on Balducci's, visit www.balduccis.com.