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Kyma Brings Flavors of the Greek Islands to Atlanta

Kyma, the highly anticipated Greek restaurant from Buckhead Life Restaurant Group, opened its doors December 17, 2001. I. Pano Karatassos, owner/president of Buckhead Life Restaurant Group, is a proud Greek descendant, and wanted to bring authenticity to the restaurant, while presenting the menu and experience in a classic style. More than a year of research in Greece, New York, London and other destinations, along with the lifetime of knowledge and experience of his Greek heritage went into the concept of Kyma.

“Simply put, Kyma offers a Greek dining experience like no other in the country. I’m thrilled and gratified that we – my personal family and business family – have put our hearts and souls into creating a restaurant truly authentic, yet unique,” said Pano Karatassos. A large percentage of the culinary and service staff is Greek, which contributes to the overall dining experience.

The food at Kyma is true to the flavors of Greece, while offering them in contemporary ways. Sharing is an important feature of the traditional Greek culture – whether sharing mezethakia (small Greek appetizers) with chilled ouzo in the bar or meze before dinner. Sharing whole fish is the norm at fish tavernas throughout Greece. It is the tradition of sharing which will become a hallmark of the Kyma experience. The menu include whole fresh fish flown in from the Mediterranean Sea, favorite spreads of Greece, and a variety of dishes from the Greek islands and mainland. The executive chef is Pano I. Karatassos, the

senior Karatassos' son. Both are passionate about providing the finest of Greek food, which is famously simple, flavorful and healthy.

The complete name of the restaurant is *Kyma, Psaro Taverna and Ouzeri*, which translates to “The Wave,” a Seafood Tavern and Ouzo Bar. Kyma is pronounced KEY-MA. The definition conveys the importance of seafood at Kyma, as well as the extensive Greek wine (more than 60 wines from Greece) and ouzo lists. Ouzo is a traditional Greek liqueur that has a distinctive licorice-like flavor. Additional regional beverage selections include Tsipouro (the Greek version of an Italian grappa), and Greek coffee prepared in briki pots brewed in hot sand. All is served as cutting-edge Greek music gently fills the restaurant.

The décor of Kyma captures a contemporary and pristine Greek ambiance. Using Karatassos’ broad vision, Bill Johnson of The Johnson Studio, designed an extraordinary restaurant space. Diners enter Kyma between two 16½ -foot wide solid marble columns, each weighing 55,000 pounds. White Thasos marble from Greece and is used throughout the exterior and interior. The entry features a one-of-a-kind fisherman-light chandelier, plus a captivating wall motif of broken plates – traditional to the Greek culture. The central ceiling showcases astrological Greek symbols and twinkling stars, and it leads to a waterfall fountain cascading to a marble display of iced whole fresh fish.

Divisions between the open rooms are bold, custom-made barrel-like columns of Renaissance Venetian plaster, patterned after those in ancient Crete, which were fashionable before the classic Ionic Greek columns became dominant. The bar area, which allows dining at small tables typically found at Greek Kafenia (or coffee houses), has a backdrop of thousands of pieces of cut glass with cobalt blue accents, along with blue “evil eyes” decorating the area to ward off evil spirits. A spotlighted net-like curtain separates the bar from the more casual dining room’s banquettes.

Kyma's dining room of dramatic white and blue features a carpet with a deep blue water-like pattern, an enclosed glass wine cellar, a ceiling of stained ash-wood planks, vivid photography and paintings depicting life in different parts of Greece, by artist Paul Chelko. Subtle touches of the Greek islands are evident with simplistic church-like architectural domes, short protruding doorway frames, and large antique olive urns from Greece.

Positioned off the Ouzo Bar is a blue covered patio with white side curtains, characteristic of the waterfront fish taverns seen on the Greek islands. There are clusters of seating surrounded by a white, vintage "broken-top" brick wall. The floor that flows from the bar through the patio is made from graystone separated by wide white grout, which is indicative of the walkways on the islands of Mykonos and Santorini. Within its first six months of opening, Kyma made the Zagat Survey's top newcomers and top patio lists. And, it was featured as one of the "Top 20 New Restaurants in the United States" by *Esquire* magazine.

Kyma serves dinner seven nights a week. Reservations are suggested, but not required at 404-262-0702. It is located in Atlanta's Buckhead neighborhood at 3085 Piedmont Road, near sister restaurants Buckhead Diner and Buckhead Bread Company & Corner Café. The other restaurants within Buckhead Life Restaurant Group include 103 West, Bistro Niko, Buckhead Diner, Chops Lobster Bar, Pricci, Veni Vidi Vici, Atlanta Fish Market, Nava, and Bluepointe in Atlanta and City Fish Market and Chops Lobster Bar in Boca Raton, Florida. More information and reservations are available at www.buckheadrestaurants.com.

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