

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**3 December 2018**

### **Blended burger featuring Alliance Group venison wins top US award**

A burger featuring Alliance Group venison and created by American celebrity chef Elizabeth Falkner has won a coveted award at an international chefs' convention.

The 'Last Year at Marienbad' burger won the Blended Burger Battle title at the 13th annual StarChefs International Chefs Congress, held in New York.

Blended burgers are a major culinary trend in the US. Entries had to include at least 25 per cent mushrooms and the winner featured Alliance venison blended with ground oyster, crimini and shiitake mushrooms. It was served with microgreens, a cucumber-wasabi raita and Bourbon-habanero hoisin sauce, in freshly-baked focaccia.

Shane Kingston, General Manager Sales at Alliance, said the inclusion of Alliance venison in the burger highlighted the co-operative's focus on developing differentiated high-quality products.

"World-class produce starts from the farm and Alliance is taking New Zealand's best farmers' produce to leading chefs and restaurateurs in global markets such as the US.

"Meeting the needs and expectations of this sector means understanding the end customer, chefs and the entire service chain along the way."

There is growing interest in New Zealand venison from the US food service sector, he said.

"While the traditional European game season remains an important market for Alliance, we are also investing in the food service sectors in our key markets. Our goal is to increase out of season chilled consumption while at the same time continue to grow sales of our seasonal chilled venison.

"To have a leading chef select Alliance's venison for her award-winning burger is a strong indication of the market's recognition of its quality."

Ms Falkner, who took home the boxing-style Blended Burger Battle Championship Belt, has been a prominent figure on the US restaurant scene for more than 20 years.

She opened her first restaurant in San Francisco in 1997. She has published two cookbooks, Demolition Desserts and Cooking off the Clock, has featured in the Michelin Guide and was a judge on the American cooking show Iron Chef America.

**ENDS**