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The 8th Excelencias Gourmet Seminar Now Underway in Havana

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The eighth edition of the International Excelencias Gourmet Seminar kicked off Monday morning at the El Laguito protocol halls in Havana, an event organized by the Excelencias Group since 2011 and this time around zeroing in on tapas and cocktails.

The Excelencias Group's president and editor-in-chief, Jose Carlos de Santiago, delivered the keynote speech that officially opened the 2018 edition of this seminar that year after year has been increasingly catching the attention of Cuban and international gastronomy professionals.

Mr. Jose Carlos de Santiago, who's also the ambassador of the Iberian-American Gastronomy Academy to Latin America and the Caribbean, underscored the importance of tapas in Spanish cuisine and its close ties with drinks and cocktails.

In the same breath, he highlighted the significance of a seminar that this year will be dedicated to cocktails, especially on the heels of the Iberian-American Gastronomy Academy's decision to grant Havana the title of "Iberian-American Capital of Cocktails" in a ceremony held last month at the celebrated Tropicana

Cabaret in Havana. An eye-catching lineup of international chefs, mixologists and experts is attending this year's seminar, including Spanish bartender Frank Lola, Cuban sommelier Rene Garcia, Spanish chef Nacho Chicharro, Habanosommelier Juan Jesus Machin from Cuba, and Michelin-star Spanish chef Palmira Soler.

The list also includes a newcomer from the UK: barista Dale Harris, winner of the 2017 World Barista Championship, and a repeater: Japanese sushi chef Hiroyuki Terada, holder of the World Guinness Record for most carrot slices in 30 seconds. The three-day event will stretch out through Wednesday with a turnout of over 300 delegates and guests from Cuba and around the world.

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