

sizzle

SPRING
2011

THE AMERICAN CULINARY FEDERATION QUARTERLY FOR STUDENTS OF COOKING

artisanal
cheese steals the
spotlight

paella
possibilities

what it takes
to run a
restaurant

cooking
in the military





Alton Brown

Celebrity Chef, Author and Host of
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brain food

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The American Culinary Federation
Quarterly for Students of Cooking

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president's message

Where Do I Go From Here?
By Michael Ty, CEC, AAC

Soon you will graduate from an American Culinary Federation Education Foundation (ACFEF)-accredited culinary program. That puts you squarely at the crossroads and begs the question, "Where do I go from here?"

There are many options. You may want to continue school, seeking more advanced degrees. Or maybe you plan to enter the job market and grow your leadership and management skills. Perhaps you are considering working with an international organization so you can learn a wide range of skills and travel to new



places around the world. Whatever you decide, make these goals the mise en place of your future: While in school, maintain the highest grades possible, so your education reflects your hard work ethic. Seek career counseling. Examine every career option, no matter how formidable it may seem. In the end, you will decide where your future will take you.

Above: Michael Ty, CEC, AAC, third from right, with Central Piedmont Community College staff and students at the NC Prevention Partners' Cut to the Core Culinary Challenge held in Charlotte, N.C., October 2010. From left to right: Tanya Beauvais, Kimberly Stoll, Pili Granda, Sandy Birmingham, Tyler Chandler and Beth Thompson-Peace.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE where do i go from here?

IT'S A NEW YEAR, AND SIZZLE HAS A NEW LOOK!

Thanks again to everyone who participated in the fall 2010 *Sizzle* survey, which gauged readers' interests and gathered valuable feedback.

With our spring issue, we are pleased to announce big changes. Department names have been changed to better reflect each section.

"Dear Diary," which highlights a day in the life of an extern, is now "Slice of Life."

"One Simple Thing," which features a step-by-step culinary technique demonstration, is now "By Degrees," and allows students to print the second page for instructions and photos to practice at home.

In "Grill," we'll continue to bring you interviews about the ACEF Apprenticeship Program.

In each issue, "Taste Test" highlights the happenings of a different ACEF-accredited culinary program.

Finally, more than 64 percent of readers said they would like to read more about international cuisine. In our new department, "International Flavors," an experienced chef will highlight a different region's cuisine or a specific ingredient.

We hope you'll continue to share *Sizzle* articles with your friends and classmates. Your feedback and suggestions are always welcome. You can reach us at sizzle@acfcchefs.net.



It is also important to question and establish your values. Once you select your career path, identify possible hurdles and prepare for those obstacles early by charting your needs. Seek advice from experienced chefs around you. Enjoy their expertise, both in terms of technical skills and overall guidance.

In the future, make an effort to meet with fellow chefs in your area. Your need to associate with others in the industry will never diminish. While your classroom experiences may soon come to an end, learning will continue throughout your career.

Realize that work is 10 percent inspiration and 90 percent perspiration. The culinary industry is difficult, but take pride in your work and you will succeed. Once you are established, return to your school and serve as a role model, sharing your successes and inspiring other students to believe that they, too, can accomplish whatever they desire.

If graduation is still in the distance, digest this information and get a head start on preparing for your career.

Last but not least, as you get closer to graduation, remember the great

opportunities your education and ACF have afforded you. The mentors you have established will assist you throughout your career. I wish you all the best, in whatever path you choose. ■

Sincerely,

Michael Ty, CEC, AAC
National President
American Culinary Federation

Above: Michael Ty, CEC, AAC, far right, Dr. Alvetta Peterman Thomas, far left, president, Atlanta Technical College (ATC), Atlanta, and instructor Larry Alford, second from right, congratulate Sheila Davis on winning the 2011 John Piskor Culinary Scholarship at ATC in February.

amuse-bouche

Bits & Pieces



students receive american academy of chefs scholarships

The American Academy of Chefs announced its 2010 Chaîne des Rôtisseurs scholarship recipients in November 2010. The following recipients will each receive \$1,000: Ashley Coates, University of Houston/Conrad Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management, Houston; Jessica Desormeaux, Lake Washington Technical College, Kirkland, Wash.; Adelle Freeman, The Restaurant School at Walnut Hill College, Philadelphia; Jesse Orrill, Johnson & Wales University, Denver; David Rico, The International Culinary School at The Art Institute of Phoenix, Phoenix; Melissa Salas, Lexington College, Chicago; San Shoppell, Kapi'olani Community College, Honolulu; Charity Teague, Central New Mexico Community College, Albuquerque, N.M.; Akino West, Johnson & Wales University, North Miami, Fla.; and Joseph White, Pierpont Culinary Academy, Fairmont, W.Va.

Top: Thomas Macrina, CEC, CCA, HGT, AAC, left, mentors David Torres.

Bottom left: *The Art of Charcuterie*

Bottom right: *Fresh From the Market: Seasonal Cooking with Laurent Tourondel and Charlotte March*

new reads!

Learn how to properly cure, brine and smoke meats, and how to make

terrines, sausages, pâtés, sauces and relishes in *The Art of Charcuterie* (John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2010), \$65, by John Kowalski and The Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, N.Y. The book offers a comprehensive look at the art form and includes an overview of equipment, ingredients, sanitation, techniques and processes.

Fresh From the Market: Seasonal Cooking with Laurent Tourondel and Charlotte March (John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2010), \$35, by Laurent Tourondel and Charlotte March, features more than 165 cocktail, appetizer, soup, salad, main dish and dessert recipes, organized by season. The 336-page book also includes recipes for special occasions, wine pairings and seasonality charts.

find a mentor

The American Culinary Federation recently announced its new mentorship program, Sharing Culinary Traditions, which aims to provide student culinarians with the opportunity to meet professional chefs in ACF who are willing to share their knowledge and life experiences with young culinarians. Learn more at www.acfchefs.org/mentorship.



cast your vote

In May, American Culinary Federation members will vote electronically for the 2011-2013 Board of Directors. To guarantee your eligibility to vote and ensure correspondence reaches you, please update your contact information by visiting www.acfchefs.org or calling the national office at (800) 624-9458. To be eligible to vote, membership dues must be paid by March 31.

NRAEF raises funds for prostart

The National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF) recently launched a fundraising initiative for its ProStart program with the goal of raising \$3 million in 2011. The organization is well on its way with more than \$1 million secured from supporters thus far.

scholarship alert

The American Academy of Chefs and Baltimore International College are offering two new scholarships available for students accepted at the college, totaling \$20,000 over four years. Two scholarships of \$2,500 per year for four years will be awarded. Deadline is March 31 of each year, and the scholarship money will be applied in the fall semester. Learn more and apply at www.acfchefs.org by clicking on “schools” then “scholarships.”

medals awarded at 2011 winterfest

First Coast Technical College's (FCTC) School of Culinary Arts, St. Augustine, Fla., hosted its 2011 WinterFest competition Jan. 14-15. The two-day event featured competitions, cooking seminars, demonstrations and meal events. In the student team skills and hot-food competition, FCTC and Keiser University, Sarasota, Fla., earned bronze medals, and The International Culinary School at The Art Institute of Tampa, Valencia Community College, Orlando, Fla., and Keiser University's Melbourne, Fla., and Tallahassee, Fla., campuses took home silver medals. In the student hot-food competition, four competitors took home bronze medals, five received silver medals and two received gold medals.

kendall students win contest

A student team from Kendall College School of Culinary Arts took home first place and \$250 in the Building a Healthier Chicago F.I.T. (Fresh Innovative and Tasty) Cooking Competition in November 2010, hosted by ACF Windy City Professional Culinarians Inc. at Union League Club, Chicago. Drew Larson, Jennifer Heringhausen and Mark Sabbe impressed judges with their entry of a vegetarian niçoise salad with pan-seared tofu and sautéed polenta.

Top: Jan Bandula, CMPC, CCE, AAC, instructs students at Baltimore International College.

Bottom: Joel Santana competes at the 2011 WinterFest competition in St. Augustine, Fla., Jan. 14-15.

sullivan university honors hiroschi noguchi

The National Center for Hospitality Studies at Sullivan University, Louisville, Ky., honored Hiroshi Noguchi, CEC, AAC, a retired chef from Orlando, Fla., with its annual Distinguished Visiting Chef Award, Feb. 24. Noguchi is the 39th recipient of the award, and joins chefs that include Bob Kinkead, Emeril Lagasse, Rick Tramonto and Marcel Desaulniers as an award recipient.

students from around the world compete in chicago

Teams of culinary students from seven countries visited the Kendall College School of Culinary Arts, Chicago, Jan. 27-28, to compete in a global cooking competition. Valeria Coto and Marcela Ramirez from Universidad del Valle de Mexico took home the Laureate Culinary Cup and gold medals. Second place went to Alison Honiotes and Adam Harralson of Kendall College, and third place went to Mohamad Irshied and Khaled Haddad from the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts, Jordan.

CIA student wins barry callebaut competition

Sean Pera, a student at The Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, N.Y., won the first-place grand prize

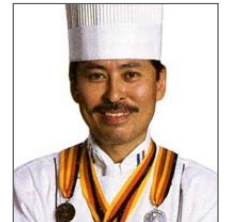
of \$3,000 in the student category of Barry Callebaut's Cacao Barry L'Art du Chocolatier Challenge held Jan. 11-12 at the Barry Callebaut Chocolate Academy, Chicago. Veronica Espinoza of Le Cordon Bleu in Austin and Brad Hansel of the French Pastry School, Chicago, placed second, and Glynis Karnop of the University of Alaska, Anchorage, Kara Schnaus of Sullivan University, Louisville, Ky., and Katrina Snelgrove of Pennsylvania College of Technology, Williamsport, Pa., placed third.

pear recipe contest

Post-secondary culinary students are invited to enter USA Pear's insPEARational recipe competition now through March 31 for the chance to win up to \$2,500 in cash. Create an original recipe using any fresh USA Pear variety in the breakfast, salad, soup, appetizer, side dish, entrée or dessert category for the chance to be selected as one of three semifinalists who will receive an all-expense-paid trip to Portland, Ore., to cook for a panel of judges. Apply at usa-pears.org/students.aspx.

send us your news

We want to hear from you. Send us your news, including recipe contests, student accomplishments and school announcements, to sizzle@acfcchefs.net.



Top: Kendall College's Renee Zonka, CEC, MBA, RD, CHE, second from right, congratulates, from left to right, Drew Larson, Mark Sabbe and Jennifer Heringhausen.

Middle: Competitors vied for the Laureate Culinary Cup at Kendall College, Chicago, Jan. 27-28.

Bottom left: Sean Pera

Bottom right: Hiroshi Noguchi, CEC, AAC

slice of life

Eric Lutzenberger



age

34

education

Culinary Institute of Savannah at Savannah Technical College, Savannah, Ga.

internship

Toucan Cafe, Savannah, Ga.

why there?

I chose to do my internship at Toucan Cafe because it has an eclectic menu with a long list of daily specials, which allows me to use a wide variety of culinary skills.

things I learned that I didn't know in culinary school

Speed and multitasking are the main things I learned. Going from working in the kitchen at school to an actual working restaurant kitchen is like going from college sports to the pros. People are paying their hard-earned money for something that I cook, and it needs to be right.

career plans

I am continuing my education and working toward a degree in nutrition and food science at Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Ga. In the future, I hope to use culinary skills and nutrition knowledge.

11 am 12 pm

11:00 a.m.

I arrive at work, and everyone is busy getting ready for lunch service and putting catering orders together. I check in with the executive chef. Then, the sauté cook asks me to pull chicken, shrimp and tilapia out of the walk-in cooler so he has a backup on the line.

Next, I grab some potatoes to cut and blanch for our hand-cut fries that are served with sandwiches.



11:30 a.m.

Once lunch service begins, I start prep work for the day. We received an order of sheepshead fillets from our seafood distributor, and they need to be deboned and trimmed for dinner service. Because I have worked on this dish before, I know we will need some roasted two-spiced red potatoes, so I also get started on those.



12:30 p.m.

The lunch crowd is pouring in and the tickets are piling up. I go up to the line to help get orders out. I set up plates for the grill and sauté cooks, and call out to the servers to pick up their food. I prefer working a station, but I am always willing to help out wherever I am needed.



4:00 p.m.

I turn my attention to setting up my station on the line. Once the lunch sauté cook is done, I bring what I will need for dinner service.

9:00 p.m.

Things finally start to slow down; the night went by in a flash. I work with a good team, so things usually go pretty smoothly. The excitement of the dinner rush and the satisfaction of knowing that you are putting out great food can't be beat.

1 pm 2 pm 3 pm 4 pm 5 pm 6 pm

9 pm 10 pm

1:00 p.m.

We made it through the first rush and have a moment to catch our breath and wait for the restaurant to turn. The second wave is not as overwhelming as the first, so I make my way back to the prep area. I work on Hellenic chicken, chicken breast stuffed with a feta cheese/spinach mixture, then wrapped in foil and par-baked. I lay out my mise en place and have 20 dishes knocked out in no time.



5:30 p.m.

Dinner service begins and things are pretty steady. Before we know it, the restaurant is full and the board is lined with tickets. I am sending out appetizers and getting a little nervous, because none of the servers are sending their tables' entrées yet.



6:30 p.m.

By now, new tickets are coming in, appetizers are being called; it is the beginning of a lull we will ride all night until service is over. Now is when I am happy I took the time to stock my station well so I don't have to make unnecessary trips back to the walk-in.

2:30 p.m.

Now it is time to get ready for dinner service. I will be working the sauté station tonight, so I get together with the executive chef to discuss specials. One is a seared sea-scallop dish with fried polenta cake and smoked Gouda cream sauce. I start the sauce, then I clean the scallops. The polenta has already been cooked and cooled and is ready to cut into rounds.



10:15 p.m.

After the last few orders have gone out, all that is left is to clean up. I wrap things up, wipe equipment down and carry lots of dishes to the dishwasher. The last job we do is sweep and mop behind the line, and then it is time to clock out and go home. At the end of the day, I am happy with how everything went. I probably could have chosen a bigger and busier place to do my internship, but I am happy with my decision.



classical v. modern



Top: Adam Munroe, lead line cook, The Country Club Chestnut Hill, Mass.

Bottom: Robert Mancuso, CMC, executive chef, The Country Club

Paella—it's one of Spain's most popular rice dishes, and it is gaining recognition in the U.S., thanks to chefs such as José Andrés, chef/owner of ThinkFoodGroup in Washington, D.C., whose mission is to educate Americans about Spanish cuisine. "I won't be happy until every single American backyard has a paella, not a barbecue, cooking on top of the grill on a Sunday afternoon," says Andrés in *Made in Spain* (Clarkson Potter/Publishers, 2008), a book that shares the name of his PBS cooking show. "That's my way of measuring success 50 years from now."

Traditionally prepared over an open fire in a large uncovered pan, the dish's components vary depending on whom

you ask and where you are. From seafood to poultry and sausage, or simply vegetables, paella is recognized by its use of saffron, its golden-yellow color and, if you're lucky, the treasured socarat, a toasted rice crust that forms on the bottom of the pan when the dish is executed properly.

According to Penelope Casas, author of *Paella! Spectacular Rice Dishes From Spain* (Henry Holt and Company Inc., 1999), the dish has only three indispensable ingredients: rice, water and olive oil. Paella originates in the Valencia region of Spain on the Eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, where it is a diet staple eaten daily, usually for lunch, the main meal of the day. The dish is so sacred that in the region there are even "paella maestros."

For the spring issue of *Sizzle*, we called on Robert Mancuso, CMC, executive chef at The Country Club in Chestnut Hill, Mass., and lead line cook Adam Munroe to demonstrate seafood and rabbit paella. Munroe's classical version blends chicken, rabbit legs, clams, mussels, calamari, shrimp and langoustines with Spanish Bomba rice and other vegetables for a delicious dish. Mancuso builds on classical cooking techniques for a modern presentation, using rabbit loin, sous vide artichokes, chorizo foam and piquillo pepper purée.

Students can connect with Spain's cultural emphasis on food and friendship by preparing this dish and eating it communally, as it was intended to be enjoyed.



classical

SEAFOOD AND RABBIT PAELLA 1. Seafood and rabbit paella is prepared in a traditional two-handled paella pan, cooked uncovered. **2.** This version of paella uses a variety of seafood, including littleneck clams, mussels, calamari, shrimp and langoustines, along with chicken and rabbit. **3.** Spanish Bomba or Calasparra rice is the star of this dish and they are the only recommended short-grain varieties. **4.** Peas are added at the end of the cooking process, providing a colorful contrast to an already vibrant dish.



Mancuso suggests pairing these paella dishes with Ribera del Duero Rosado or a Rioja.

modern

MODERN-STYLE RABBIT PAELLA 1. In the modern version, rabbit loin wrapped in Serrano ham offers a high-end selling point to the dish. **2.** Although the presentation differs, the rice is still cooked in a paella pan, and is placed in a mold before service. **3.** Sous vide artichokes demonstrate a modern cooking technique for this classical dish. **4.** To modernize the dish, Mancuso enhanced flavors by adding chorizo foam, sofrito and piquillo pepper purée.

classical

A Johnson & Wales University, Providence, R.I., graduate, Munroe has worked in the hospitality industry for nine years, with the last five spent at The Country Club, but before this project, he had never prepared paella. “I enjoyed studying the different regional tones to the dish and experimenting with recipes,” says Munroe, who has had paella in restaurants (not a memorable experience). Now that he has created the dish many times—Mancuso ran it in the club’s dining room for a week during Munroe’s research—he recognizes how paella is built from the bottom up, and that as each new ingredient is added, a distinct flavor profile is created.

“The biggest challenge with this dish is understanding timing so each item, such as the mussels, clams, langoustines, etc., is cooked perfectly,” he says. “Even with a well-written recipe, the cook must pay careful attention to aroma. I found that toward the end of the cooking process, as the socarat developed, the dish took on a different bouquet, a natural indicator of doneness.”

Munroe also experimented with different types of stock until the recipe was well-balanced. He found that although there are many paella varieties, they all share common cooking principles.

“It’s important students know the techniques of classic dishes such as paella,” Munroe says. “Without understanding a dish’s foundation, it’s hard to deliver a modern twist.” ■

Seafood and Rabbit Paella

Yield: 6 portions

Time: 1 hour, 35 minutes

Ingredients:

- 3 dried **nora peppers**, stemmed, seeded, chopped
- 3 oz. **Spanish extra virgin olive oil**
- 2 **red bell peppers**, divided
- 1 oz. smashed **garlic clove**
- 3 oz. fresh **tomato purée**, processed in food mill
- 3 lbs. **white fish bones**
- ½ lb. roasted **shrimp shells**
- 2 qts. **water**
- Salt**, to taste, divided
- 1 oz. **Spanish olive oil**
- 6 **chicken thighs**, boned and tied or cubed
- 6 **rabbit legs**, 1-inch cubes
- ¼ cup diced **onion**
- 3 **artichoke** hearts, cut in quarters
- 3 oz. dry-cured **Spanish chorizo**, cut in coins
- 1⅓ cups **Spanish Bomba** or **Calasparra rice**
- Pinch of **saffron**, steeped in hot water
- 6 **littleneck clams**, cleaned of sand and grit
- 6 **mussels**, scrubbed, beards removed
- 6 small **calamari**, sliced in rings
- 3 16/20 **shrimp**, butterflied, shell on
- 3 **langoustines**, head on, cut in half
- ½ cup blanched **peas** or **lima beans**
- Aïoli**, as needed for service

Remove ½ cup for paella stock. Purée remaining mixture. Reserve 1 oz. for paella.

2. Prepare paella stock: Cook fish bones, shrimp shells, water and salt for 1 hour. Add ½ cup sofrito to paella stock; cook 30 minutes. Strain stock through cheesecloth. Reserve.
3. In paella pan, heat olive oil over medium-high flame. Add chicken and rabbit; brown on all sides. Remove. Peel and dice remaining ½ red bell pepper. Add ¼ cup onion, artichoke, chorizo and diced red pepper, cooking until lightly brown. Add rice; sauté for a few minutes. Return rabbit and chicken to pan; cover with 3½ cups hot paella stock, reserved prepared puréed sofrito and saffron tea. Set timer for 5 minutes; cook paella over high heat. Stir rice during this stage. When time is up, do not stir rice. With 10 minutes remaining, add seafood in stages: clams, mussels, calamari, shrimp and langoustines. Mussels and clams should be facing up. Split shrimp and langoustines should be placed shell-side down. When 10 minutes is up, turn heat on high to create socarat. Once it is achieved, remove from heat; add peas. Let paella rest for 5 minutes.
4. Serve in paella pan with aïoli on side.



modern

Mancuso, one of only 66 certified master chefs in the country, and a graduate of The Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, N.Y., has been refining his paella recipes since his early years as a chef. “I enjoy the flavor profiles and versatility of cooking paella,” he says. “There are probably as many different paella recipes as there are cooks in Spain, so you can see why it’s a fun dish.”

The challenge is cooking all the ingredients perfectly leading up to and including the socarat. Selecting

the proper rice is also imperative. Mancuso recommends only using Spanish Bomba or Calasparra, short-grain rice produced in Spain, which grows a third slower than other rice because of the cold water that passes through the paddies.

The process of modernizing a dish such as seafood and rabbit paella takes focus and analysis. First, Mancuso reviewed all components to determine the best way to alter the dish while preserving its integrity.

Next, he looked for alterations to make to the proteins, such as preparing rabbit loins wrapped in Spanish ham instead of rabbit legs.

Lastly, he focused on enhancing flavors, which he did by adding chorizo foam, sofrito and piquillo pepper purée. When it comes to presentation, Mancuso’s message is, “Form follows function.”

Students should take paella recipes slowly. “For my modern dish, you still have to traditionally cook the

rice in a paella pan, so understanding this aspect is important. You also must know how to properly butcher a rabbit. Once you master these things, then you can experiment.”

And when it comes to experimenting, paella possibilities are endless. “If you start with a great sofrito, chorizo and stock, you can add any combination of meat and seafood as long as you can cook them in the time it takes the rice to absorb the liquid,” Mancuso says. ■

modern-style rabbit paella

Yield: 6 portions

Time: 1 hour, 35 minutes

piquillo pepper purée

Ingredients:

- 1 T. sliced shallot
- 1 oz. red bell pepper syrup (reduced red bell pepper juice)
- 7 oz. piquillo peppers, drained, patted dry
- Salt and cayenne pepper, to taste
- 2 oz. Spanish extra virgin olive oil

Method: Combine shallot, pepper syrup, peppers, salt and cayenne pepper in Vita-Prep blender; purée. Slowly stream in olive oil until mixture is thick enough to stand on its own. Refrigerate overnight.

rabbit loin wrapped in serrano ham

Ingredients:

- 1 rabbit flank with loins attached
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 4 thin slices Serrano ham
- 1 oz. olive oil

Method: Remove loins from saddle, leaving one flank attached. Clean and trim flank to size of loin; season. Lay both loins in flank; roll into tight cylinder. Lay 20-inch piece of plastic wrap on slightly damp work surface. Lay four slices Serrano ham slightly overlapping. Set rolled rabbit loin

on top; roll up. Tie with butcher’s twine. Roll tightly in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 2-4 hours.

sofrito

Ingredients:

- 3 dried nora peppers, stemmed, seeded, chopped
- 3 oz. Spanish extra virgin olive oil
- 1½ red bell peppers, diced
- 1 oz. smashed garlic clove
- 6 oz. fresh tomato purée, processed in food mill
- 2 T. salt

Method: Over medium heat, toast nora peppers in olive oil. Add red bell pepper and garlic; cook briefly. Add tomato purée and salt; simmer 5 minutes. Remove ½ cup for paella stock. Purée remaining mixture. Reserve 1 oz. for paella.

paella stock

Ingredients:

- 3 lbs. white fish bones
- ½ lb. roasted shrimp or langoustine shells
- 2 qts. water
- ½ cup prepared sofrito
- Salt, to taste

Method: Cook fish bones, shrimp or langoustine shells, water and salt for 1 hour. Add reserved sofrito; cook 30

minutes. Strain through cheesecloth. Reserve 2 oz. for langoustine; reserve rest for paella rice.

sous vide artichokes

Ingredients:

- 2 artichoke hearts, trimmed
- 1 T. minced Serrano ham
- 1 T. sliced shallot
- ¼ T. minced garlic clove
- 4 black peppercorns
- 2 oz. chicken stock
- 1 T. lemon juice
- 1 oz. white wine
- Pinch of salt

Method: Combine artichoke hearts, Serrano ham, shallot, garlic, peppercorns, chicken stock, lemon juice, white wine and salt in vacuum bag; cook at 180°F for 1 hour. Remove artichokes from bag; quarter. Reserve.

warm langoustine

Ingredients:

- 18 langoustine tails, peeled
- 1 oz. Spanish olive oil
- 2 oz. paella stock
- 1 oz. butter
- ½ cup finely chopped parsley
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Method: Sauté langoustine in olive oil. Deglaze with paella stock.

Emulsify with butter; finish with chopped parsley, salt and pepper. **Note:** Be sure to trim langoustine tails so langoustine can be presented upright. Reserve hot for plating.

chorizo foam

Ingredients:

- 3 oz. dry-cured chorizo sausage, diced
- ¼ T. minced garlic
- ½ T. minced onion
- 1 T. olive oil
- 1 cup milk
- 2 T. cream
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 T. soy lecithin

Method: Sweat chorizo, garlic and onion in olive oil; add milk, cream, salt and pepper. Simmer 15 minutes; strain mixture through chinois. Blend in soy lecithin. Reserve for service.

paella rice

Ingredients:

- 1 oz. Spanish olive oil
- 3 oz. rabbit leg meat, minced
- 2 T. brunoise red bell pepper
- 2 T. brunoise yellow bell pepper
- 2 T. brunoise green bell pepper
- 2 T. brunoise yellow onion
- 3 oz. dry-cured Spanish chorizo, brunoise

1 1/3 cups **Spanish Bomba or Calasparra rice**

1 oz. **sofrito**

3 1/2 cups **paella stock**

Pinch of **saffron**, steeped in 2 T. hot water

6 **calamari** tentacles, trimmed, reserved

1/2 cup **peas**, blanched

12 small **mussels**, steamed in paella stock, removed from shell, liquid reserved

6 **Manila clams**, steamed in paella stock, removed from shell, liquid reserved

Micro lettuce, for garnish

Method: In paella pan, heat olive oil over medium-high flame. Add rabbit; lightly brown. Remove. Add peppers, onion and chorizo; sweat. Add rice and 1 oz. reserved puréed sofrito; sauté for a few minutes. Return rabbit to pan; cover with hot reserved paella stock, reserved shellfish liquor and saffron water. Set timer for 5 minutes; cook paella over high heat. Stir rice during this stage. When time is up, do not stir. Simmer for approximately 10 minutes, or until all liquid is absorbed. Once liquid is absorbed and time is up, add calamari. Turn heat on high

to create socarrat. Remove from heat; place peas, mussels and clams on top; cover. Let paella rest for 5 minutes.

at service:

1. Remove rabbit from refrigerator. Unroll loin; place in pan of hot olive oil; lightly brown on all sides. Transfer to 350°F oven; cook to internal temperature of 150°F. Allow to rest.
2. Remove butcher's twine from rabbit; slice.

3. Froth reserved chorizo mixture using cappuccino machine or immersion blender to create foam.
4. Remove clams, mussels and calamari from rice; reserve hot. Pack paella rice in rectangular mold. Place mussels, clams and trimmed calamari tentacles on top; top with chorizo foam. Arrange piquillo pepper purée, sous vide artichoke, rabbit loin and langoustines around rice. Garnish with micro lettuce.



SMOOTH operator

Successful restaurant owners
combine culinary skills and
business know-how.

By Suzanne Hall



The entrepreneurial spirit moves America. From carpenters to software designers, doctors to mechanics, people want to work for themselves. Culinarians are no exception. In fact, they may be more driven to “own their own place” than some in other occupations. From the first time they put on that white jacket or attend their first cooking class, many dream about running a restaurant. There’s more to

operating a restaurant than wearing a toque and being a good or even a great chef, though. It takes a combination of culinary skills, personality traits, business ability and financing to pave the road to success.

And, it’s hard work. Actually, “It’s relentless. The work never stops,” says Raymond Ost, chef/owner of Sandrine’s Bistro in Cambridge, Mass. Caleb

Above: Guests at The Lazy Goat enjoy a Mediterranean-style menu and patio seating.



Top: The Lazy Goat's Lazy Paella: calamari, prawns, mussels, chorizo "Bomba" rice, haricot verts and sofrito broth.

Bottom: At Bayou Bakery, Coffee Bar and Eatery, guests enjoy a variety of Southern sweets.

Opposite: To run a successful restaurant, owners must be flexible. At Bayou Bakery, Coffee Bar and Eatery, David Guas does everything from cleaning to sandwich prep.

Lentchner, chef and general manager at Marsha Brown Creole Kitchen and Lounge in New Hope, Pa., agrees. "I love to emphasize that this is a blue-collar industry," Lentchner says. "People have this idea that being in bars and restaurants is fun. That's true, from the guests' perspective. But for those in the industry, it's a hard job. That doesn't mean it isn't fun some of the time, but you have to be geared up for long hours and lots of pressure."

culinary concerns

A good restaurant starts, of course, with good cooking. But cooking skills aren't the only culinary talent needed to run a restaurant. You need to be able to

recognize talents in others, train kitchen staff, develop recipes and "you must be able to read a menu like a conductor reads a musical score," says Nicholas Petti, chef/owner of Mendo Bistro in Fort Bragg, Calif.

Creativity and imagination are traits needed to run all aspects of a restaurant, including the kitchen. Although, when it comes to menu planning, imagination is generally more valuable. "There's a lot of pressure for restaurants to be creative, but the truth is, most diners don't want creativity. They want good food and service," says Petti.

Chefs who own restaurants don't necessarily have to run their own kitchens. The food buck stops with them, but they have a kitchen manager overseeing the day-to-day operation.

That's what Elizabeth Wiley has done at The Meadowlark in Dayton, Ohio. After 10 years as one of three partners in another restaurant, she opened her own place six and a half years ago. One of the first things she did was hire someone to handle the kitchen. She still runs the brunch line, but Dave Rawson, co-chef/kitchen manager, handles the rest and does the kitchen scheduling. Wiley runs the front of the house with the help of a head server.

“After cooking for so many years, you begin to burn out,” she says. “It’s good to be involved in other aspects of the restaurant.”

To step back from the kitchen a bit, you need good people. “I hire people who are grounded and serious about what they do, not those who think they should already be famous,” says Vicky Moore, executive chef of The Lazy Goat in Greenville, S.C.

personality pointers

If you’re looking to strut your stuff in a place with your name on the door, change your attitude. There’s a lot more scrubbing than strutting when you run a restaurant. Ask David Guas, the former corporate pastry chef for Passion Food Hospitality in Washington, D.C., now chef/owner of DamnGoodSweet Consulting Group, Mclean, Va., and managing partner and chef of Bayou Bakery, Coffee Bar and Eatery in Arlington, Va.

Guas opened his bakery in November 2010. In the first few weeks, he found himself emptying the dirty-diaper bin and cleaning jelly off the dining room floor. Guas also preps po’ boy sandwiches and runs the register, when necessary. “Sometimes it’s just easier and



faster to do it yourself than go looking for someone else to do it,” he says.

That’s called flexibility, and it’s a trait that serves a restaurant owner well. And it can save money when it comes to cleaning refrigerator coils, unstopping a drain or duct-taping a broken

hose. “I like to try and fix things myself,” Moore says. “That saves me money I can use for cool stuff for the kitchen.”

Just be careful that you know what you’re doing. “Sometimes it can be better to hire out repairs, then watch carefully so you can do them next time,” Petti advises.



Top: The inviting downstairs bar at The Lazy Goat.

Bottom: At least four versions of *flammekueche*, the national dish of Alsace, France, are on the menu at Sandrine's Bistro at all times.

Wiping the floor doesn't do much for your ego, but the boss with the big ego doesn't always succeed when it comes to the restaurant business. Instead of ego, a love of people and the desire to treat them properly, whether they're guests or employees, will serve the would-be restaurant owner well.

Guests like to feel that they have a connection to the chef. That's why Ost and Wiley "work" the dining room, speaking with their guests. Petti does the same, and uses this time to keep track of what's going on. Eyes constantly roving, he looks for guests who seem unhappy or impatient, and takes action to solve any problem. He also checks for employees who need help. "The days of the screaming chef should be long over," Petti says. "If I don't treat my employees right, how can I expect them to treat my guests right?" Ost agrees. "My staff stays with me. Why? Because I'm a nice guy."

Chefs/owners also need a commitment to their communities. "I work as a March of Dimes chef, teach cooking classes for children and participate in other activities at the request of my guests," Ost explains. That's good business.

To keep all the balls in the air at the same time, restaurant owners have to know how to multitask. "But you can't let it overwhelm you," Lentchner says. "Remember, the best way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time. You have to keep your eye on the big picture and surround yourself with good people."

"It's a balancing act, and it's not hard when everything is in harmony. But there are those days when what can go wrong, does," Moore says. "Then you have to keep your cool and be levelheaded. You'll live through it."

business sense

As important as good people is good business sense. Without it, you will close down, Ost believes. Bookkeepers, accountants and tax experts are helpful, even essential, but the responsibility is essentially in the hands of the person running the restaurant. Learning that you can't spend money you don't have and spending the money

you do have wisely are keys to success. For example, Wiley didn't pay herself a salary for the first year The Meadowlark was open. "It didn't matter," she says. "I didn't have time to spend it, anyway." She limited her staff, opting to host at lunch and dinner for a while. But she paid employees a good wage. "If you want good people, you have to pay them well," she notes. Petti opened Mendo Bistro with used equipment. "To this day, the only thing I've ever purchased new was an ice maker," he says.

Costing food and other items, keeping track of payroll and other expenses and marketing are all aspects of running a restaurant. Most can be learned in culinary school, if you're paying attention. "Sometimes, when I'm dealing with financial or management issues, I can see the chapter and page of the textbook for that class I wanted to get over with so I could cook," Moore says. "Now, I'm glad I had the classes."

money matters

Last, but far from least, you need money to run a restaurant. It helps to be rich, but most people aren't. "I wasn't rich when I opened Mendo Bistro, and I'm not rich now. But I was lucky," Petti says. He ran into a banker who knew him from another restaurant. She suggested he

approach her bank for a loan. As it turned out, that bank didn't loan money to restaurant startups. But the experience empowered him to try another bank, and he got a loan.

One of the things Wiley did before opening Meadowlark was write a detailed review of the restaurant she wanted to open and project its cost. "I couldn't believe it. I thought I'd need to borrow about \$100,000. It turned out to be \$300,000." She took all the money she had and could borrow from friends and went to the bank, which loaned the balance—\$211,000. She's now within months of paying off the loan.

"It's amazing the licenses, fees and other costs you don't think of," Guas says. "I was forever writing checks in the weeks before we opened." He solved his money crunch by taking on partners and investors.

Finally, it takes experience to run a restaurant. "No one should ever be allowed to open a restaurant unless they've worked in one," Wiley says. "And, you have to love it." ■

Suzanne Hall has been writing about chefs, restaurants, food and wine from her home in Soddy-Daisy, Tenn., for more than 25 years.

resources

Learn more about what it takes to run a restaurant by hitting the books. Here are some of the many resources available:

- *The Restaurant Manager's Handbook: How to Set up, Manage, and Operate a Financially Successful Food Service Operation* (Atlantic Publishing Company, 2007), by Douglas Robert Brown; \$79.95
- *Restaurant Success by the Numbers: A Money-Guy's Guide to Opening the Next Hot Spot* (Ten Speed Press, 2007), by Roger Fields; \$16.99
- *Running a Restaurant for Dummies* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004), by Michael Garvey, Heather Dismore and Andrew Dismore; \$21.99
- *Setting the Table—The Transforming Power of Hospitality in Business* (HarperCollins, 2009), by Danny Meyer; \$14.99

must-have skills

You can cook, you're business savvy, but what about personality? Here are some of the personality traits needed to be a successful restaurateur:

- Ability to hold (or hold off) liquor
- Business sense
- Leadership skills
- Passion
- Persistence
- Positive energy
- Presence
- Schmoozability
- Tolerance
- No life (outside the restaurant)

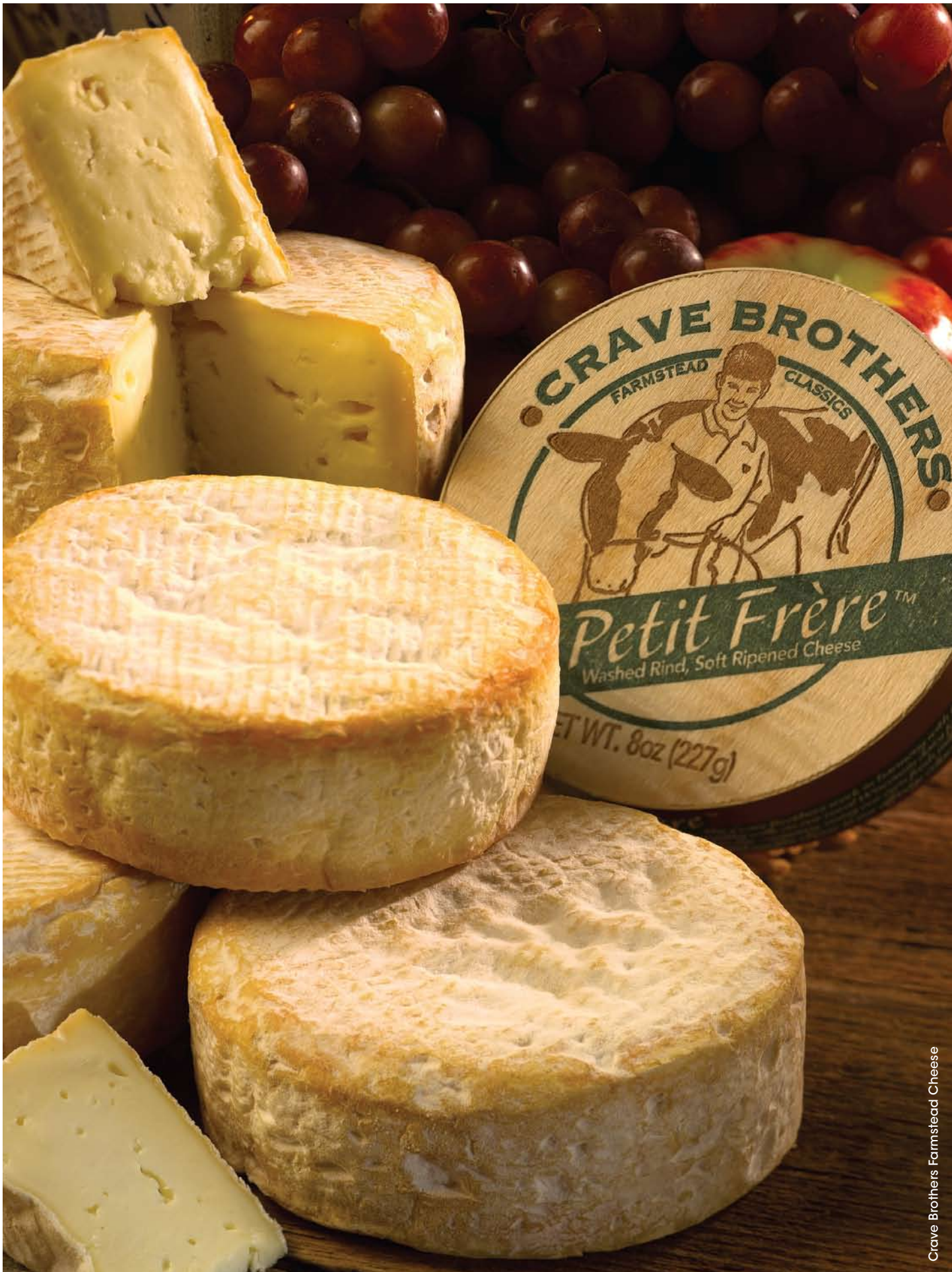
Source: *Running a Restaurant for Dummies* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004)

cheese

CULTURE

Inspired by the local food movement, chefs and patrons embrace the growing number of American artisanal cheeses.

By Jody Shee



“Artisanal” is not a catchword to attach to a rustic-looking piece of food to give it a trendy sound. In the case of those making and serving artisanal cheese, it’s a genuine skill that is experiencing a renaissance in the U.S.

Young culinarians are lucky to begin a career in foodservice at the same time that artisanal cheese is taking its place in the forefront of all that’s handcrafted, sustainable and world-class in freshness and flavor.

coming to terms

At its core, experts agree that artisanal cheese is made by hand in small batches by an artisan. Some would add that no machinery is used in the process, but that’s a background issue that should not take the focus off the art. “Large-scale equipment would never be involved, but some use smaller-scale equipment or machinery, using technology through temperature control or scales, things like that,” says Jenny Harris, executive chef/fromager (cheese expert) for Tria Commissary, Philadelphia, which prepares food for two Tria wine, cheese and beer cafes, and Biba Wine Bar, also in Philadelphia.

“We are developing that sense of history, place and flavors that emerge from different parts of America. Artisanal is alive and well.”

—Matt Jennings

A more refined subset of artisanal cheese is farmstead cheese, in which the animals used for milking and the cheesemaking operation are located together.

Many cheeses are made with heat-treated pasteurized milk to eliminate bacteria, while others are made with raw milk. In that case, it is required by law that the cheese be aged for a minimum of 60 days. “That way, whatever bad bacteria exists because of not being heated all the way gets eaten up by good bacteria, and after 60 days, it’s perfectly fine to eat,” says Steve McKeon, chief executive officer for cheese producer Emmi Roth USA Inc., Monroe, Wis.

Only in the past decade have American cheesemakers developed their craft and product to the point that they export their cheeses to European countries, which themselves are leaders in fine cheesemaking, says Matt Jennings, executive chef, co-owner and master cheesemonger at Farmstead

in Providence, R.I. “We are developing that sense of history, place and flavors that emerge from different parts of America. Artisanal is alive and well.” Farmstead was founded as a cheese shop in 2002, with La Laiterie, a 40-seat new-American bistro, added on a few years later.

The restaurant draws on the emerging ideal of “food being locally sourced, made by hand in small quantities and really seasonal, as an honest reflection of food we love,” Jennings says. As a former gourmet retail cheese buyer with additional experience working for a cheese producer and wholesaler selling to restaurants, Jennings has spent his career involved in the cheese revolution, which, he says, really started to explode the same time farmers markets started to take off. “People got interested in that California mentality of purchasing from their farmer buddy down the street, and it spread from west to east,” he says. The passion for artisanal cheese relates to the convergence of unique flavors related to time

and place. “It’s an incredible representation of history. It’s kind of a stamp on a certain time frame,” he says, comparing it to the way wine represents the nuances of the earth.

operations and animals

Naturally, the flavor and type of cheese first depends on the animal used and what it eats, then on the techniques of the cheesemaker. Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese LLC, Waterloo, Wis., milks its own Holstein cows and gives them the same feed year-round to keep the flavor, protein and butter consistent, says company president George Crave.

The cheese, and thus the milk, should reflect the uniqueness of the artisan and the factory making it, he adds. Cheeses can be made from cow’s, goat’s or sheep’s milk, or a blend. With its cow’s milk, Crave Brothers makes a fresh, milky mozzarella, classic mascarpone and its most popular, unique European-style Les Frères cheese with an earthy, fruity flavor.

The art involved in Les Frères, for example, has much to do with the different cultures used to get the right flavor. Rather than pressing the cheese, it is form-filled, allowed to develop



La Laiterie at Farmstead Inc.



Daniel Orr



in a warm room for 24 hours, then brined and moved to a cellar environment where it is washed in a variety of cultures for a few weeks, then packed and sent out. It continues to age and develop through distribution, Crave says. When it’s 2 months old, it tastes different than at 1, 3 or 4 months. “It starts to develop an attitude and gets nice and bigger flavors—rich and savory with a very creamy mouthfeel.”

Alex Seidel, chef/co-owner of Denver’s Fruition Restaurant, bought a 10-acre farm and recently purchased a flock of sheep. The restaurant staff turned the barn into a cheesemaking facility with aging rooms, and in October 2010, began making and selling ricotta cheese to 40

Top: Hand-selected artisanal cheeses are prepared for a cheese board at La Laiterie at Farmstead Inc.

Left: Called Berry Blues FARMpie, this pizza, created by Daniel Orr, features artisanal goat cheese, apples and cranberry compote.

Right: Fruition Restaurant’s Alex Seidel raises his own sheep and produces and sells ricotta cheese.



restaurants in the Denver area. “We’re the only artisanal sheep’s milk producer in the state of Colorado,” Seidel says. He is developing an Italian-style Pecorino-type cheese, which will be available at two ages, a young one as a table cheese and one aged longer suited to grating.

Through his new experience with artisanal cheese, he advises others to understand where their food comes from and how it is produced. “Everyone doesn’t need to be a cheesemaker. Discern the good from the bad. There must be an understanding of quality, texture and flavor,” he says. “Understanding how it was produced will help, and whether it is raw or pasteurized. It will all help in becoming a better chef.”

One of the challenges in artisanal cheesemaking is that producers sometimes are not familiar with foodservice and

are inexperienced in connecting with chefs. In Texas, it’s a gap filled by Houston Dairymaids, a marketer and wholesaler that partners with 10 Texas dairies. “I see myself as a conduit. I collect the story from the cheesemaker and tell it to the chef,” says owner Lindsey Schechter. With her experience, she advises others to develop a palate for cheese “and be very particular about sources, whether through a distributor or the cheesemakers themselves. Try to build relationships and be open to a lot of communications. You will be rewarded with the best cheese they have to offer.”

menu applications

Some might shy away from artisanal cheese, thinking that they can’t afford the higher price. Jennings with Farmstead suggests that reluctant buyers shop at small artisan showcases where they can talk directly with cheesemakers.

While some chefs might choose not to hide their most prized cheese in a mac and cheese dish, Jennings finds it to be the perfect application for the knotty bits left from the cheese shop. “At the end of the week, we take all the odd shapes of cheese, grate them up, and that’s the sauce for our mac and cheese. That’s what we’re known for,” he says.

From his history working in restaurants in France and Belgium, Daniel Orr developed an appreciation for artisanal cheeses that he carried with him to his current restaurant, FARMbloomington in Bloomington, Ind., where he is chef/owner. It fits with his passion of helping neighbors and supporting local vendors, “creating our own regional palate of flavor we can support and use in our restaurant.”

For example, the artisanal goat cheese he purchases from Capriole Farm in Greenville, Ind., is part of the character of what he menus as the World’s Greatest BLT. Besides the goat cheese, it combines local bacon, avocado, tomato, arugula and wasabi/herb mayo. Capriole Julianna goat cheese is aged longer (4-8 months), giving it a “funkier” flavor, Orr says. For the flavor to shine, he serves it on its own, or accompanying a salad with curly endive, local apples

and apple cider vinaigrette. The artisanal goat cheeses also work as part of an herb dip for crudités.

With his own ricotta cheese, Seidel with Fruition found great success including it in a beet salad. He rolls it in pumpkin seed granola and serves with beets and greens. Each time he develops a new dessert menu, Seidel highlights a cheese. Rather than serve it with a cracker, he incorporates it in a small composed dish, much like an appetizer.

In Kansas City, Mo., Jasper Mirabile Jr., chef/co-owner of Italian eatery Jasper's, gets artisanal cheese from several farms, including Crave Brothers, and is always impressed with the flavor and texture compared to industrial cheese. "Consider master cheesemakers and the certification they go through. It's an honor to meet these people," he says. He serves the artisanal cheese several ways. A cheese board available before the meal always features five cheeses: two Italian, one Wisconsin, one from Missouri and ricotta cheese he makes himself, which may be served with a bit of homemade blood orange marmalade.

But one of the signature services at Jasper's is Mirabile's table-side cheesemaking exhibition. He wheels out a mozzarella-making

cart, complete with curds and boiling water, and stretches the cheese before the guest while explaining the fine points of cheesemaking.

While some chefs advise against mixing artisanal cheese in with a dish because other ingredients may take away from the cheese, Mirabile believes that one of the advantages of artisanal cheese is that it holds up better. He uses his mozzarella in several dishes, including Pollo Alla Saltimbocca, chicken breast medallions layered with prosciutto di Parma and fresh mozzarella in a lemon/sage reduction.

Naming the cheesemaker on the menu draws attention to the fineness of the cheese and is a way to applaud the local artisan.

For those looking at a foodservice career, "I urge everyone to go not only for artisanal, but local, smaller batches," says Harris with Tria Commissary. "It's the way things should be in the future." ■

Jody Shee, an Olathe, Kan.-based freelance writer and editor, previously was editor of a foodservice magazine. She has 20 years of foodwriting experience and writes the blog www.sheefood.com.

cheese pointers

- "Spoilage is one of the big issues across the board with artisanal cheese. It should never be tightly wrapped in plastic wrap. Rather, wrap in cheese paper or parchment or butcher's paper."
—Matt Jennings, executive chef, co-owner and master cheesemonger, Farmstead Inc., Providence, R.I.
- "There will always be inconsistencies from one cheese batch to another within an artisan's operation, because the cheese is handmade. This wide range of variability is to be expected and embraced."
—Jenny Harris, executive chef/ fromager, Tria Commissary, Philadelphia

MORE ON THE WEB

For Jasper Mirabile Jr.'s creamy polenta recipe, visit www.acfchefs.org/sizzle.

Opposite: Artisanal goat cheese purchased from Capriole Farm in Greenville, Ind., is part of the character of what Daniel Orr menus as the World's Greatest BLT at his FARMBloomington restaurant.

COOKING FOR THE troops

Military chefs enjoy variety, adventure
and rewarding careers.

By Kathryn Kjarsgaard



The military is a hot-button topic right now, and patriotism abounds. Not only are Americans showing strong support for troops, but many also are considering military careers. For culinary students in particular, there is an array of opportunities to serve as a military chef.

All five branches of the military—Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines and Navy—offer varied and exciting opportunities for cooks and chefs, from working for the Presidential Foodservice staff at the White House to cooking for ambassadors and dignitaries overseas, and from preparing and serving meals on aircraft for top government officials

to providing meals for soldiers in training and on Special Forces assignments.

In addition, a career as a military chef comes with job security, great benefits and perks such as traveling abroad, in addition to the camaraderie of being a part of the military.

“To serve your country and take care of the troops is such an important job,” says Staff Sgt. (SSG) Guy Winks, CCC, a chef in the Army. “I’ve seen firsthand how important great food is. It can make or break a training mission. If the food is great, those guys can handle anything thrown at them. They are out there in extreme temperatures and conditions. Knowing that

Left: Staff Sgt. Guy Winks, CCC, a chef in the Army for 17 years, tests for ProChef Level II certification at The Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, N.Y., in 2009.

Right: Military culinary competitions provide Staff Sgt. Guy Winks, CCC, with a platform to hone his skills.



Above: Master Chief Petty Officer Michael Carter, CEC, spent seven years cooking for President George W. Bush and the first family as part of the Navy's Presidential Foodservice staff.

when they come in for lunch they will have great-tasting food is good for morale. It's something to look forward to each day."

For Ellen Adams, CC, who is retired from the Air Force and now a personal chef, joining the military opened doors. "I'm the youngest of six children and grew up in northern New Hampshire. My parents both worked, and we never traveled. I always had a desire to see the world. When I joined, the job market was not great, much like it is now. The military guaranteed me a job, and it was an opportunity to see new places, from Europe to Iraq."

cooking for the president

Perhaps one of the most coveted military foodservice positions is to serve on the Presidential Foodservice staff at the White House, as Master Chief Petty Officer Michael Carter, CEC, did. Carter, who has been in the Navy since 1993 and served as a chef at the White House from 2002 to 2009, says the Navy has run the White House kitchen since 1951.

"When I joined the Navy, I had every intention of being a chef," says Carter. "I attended boot camp, then enrolled in a

culinary program. I then worked on a ship and was a cook for a commanding officer."

At the White House, Carter was part of a 16-member team that prepared 325 meals a day for President George W. Bush, his cabinet, Vice President Dick Cheney and senior staff members.

"Our mission was to provide 24/7 service to the president and the first family, including traveling extensively with him and providing food security duties, as well," says Carter.

On average, Carter worked 14-hour days, six or seven days a week, he says. The job provided opportunities to travel the world. According to Carter, only a select group representing the Navy's best and most responsible can qualify for the Presidential Foodservice staff.

One of Carter's accomplishments while serving on the White House team was to improve training. In 2004, he brought in David Bearl, CCC, CCE, AAC, coordinator for business and industry services at First Coast Technical College in St. Augustine, Fla., to conduct training courses and American Culinary Federation (ACF) certification exams on-site for chefs, which allowed more

of them to train at once. As a result, more than 80 chefs earned ACF's certified executive chef designation.

Today, Carter is in charge of training culinary specialists and preparing Navy ships for inspection at Naval Station Mayport, Mayport, Fla.

cooking on the go

When Winks joined the Army more than 17 years ago, he intended to train as a physical therapist. However, an injury prevented him from being able to travel to physical therapy school, so he had to choose to become either a mechanic or a cook. He chose the latter, hoping to draw from experiences working in restaurants as a teenager.

After attending boot camp and cooking school, he worked in foodservice for the artillery division, and spent 11 years as a chef for Special Forces in Fort Carson, Colo.

"I cooked for the Green Berets at their compound. When they would leave, they'd take a support package, including a cook," says Winks. "I went on these trips many times, all over the world. I've gone on scuba diving, mountain climbing and

cold-weather missions. We had to figure out how to purchase food locally and how to stay on budget."

In locations such as Iraq, Winks says contractors typically handle the cooking, but cooks still go with the soldiers. "Sometimes we had to serve as soldiers. Even if you are a chef, you still have to know how to shoot your weapon and do parachute jumps."

Back at the compound in Colorado, he says a typical day working in the dining facility would entail starting at 5 a.m. on the breakfast shift. Then he would clean up, make lunch, clean the kitchen and leave at 2 p.m. or 3 p.m. The next day, he would come in at 10:30 a.m. to do the afternoon shift, which included serving lunch, making dinner and prepping breakfast for the next day, leaving around 7 p.m.

"In addition to working a lot of hours, you also have to stay in shape," Winks says. "Twice a year you're given physical fitness tests that include running, sit-ups and pushups."

In terms of his training, he gained knowledge on the job and through culinary competitions, such as those sanctioned by ACF and the military.

do you have what it takes?

Not everyone is cut out for the military. Here are some of the skills and characteristics you'll need:

- A love of cooking and passion for food
- Interest in learning/continuing education
- Willingness to put in extra hours to train yourself
- Willingness to be shipped out on a moment's notice
- Ability to work long hours at a demanding job
- Ability to stay in good physical shape and maintain military skills while working
- Interest in working in a "service profession"
- Flexibility

more information

Interested in becoming a chef in the military? Contact the branch that interests you and ask to speak with a recruiter about foodservice opportunities.

- **Air Force:**
www.af.mil
- **Army:**
www.army.mil
- **Coast Guard:**
www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-career/enlisted-opportunities/enlisted-ratings-descriptions/food-service-specialist-%28fs%29
- **Marines:**
www.marines.mil/Pages/Default.aspx
- **Navy:**
www.navy.mil/swf/index.asp



Top: After 20 years in the Air Force, Ellen Adams, CC, started a second career as a personal chef.

Bottom: WACS president and judge Gissur Gudmundsson, HAAC, right, observes Master Chief Food Service Specialist (FSCM) Justin Reed, CEC, as he competes as a member of the Coast Guard team in the 2010 Freedom Chef Challenge in Anaheim, Calif.

“I started competing in the 1990s, and I have learned a lot,” he says. “I also participated in the Training with Industry program through the military, spending a year working and attending classes at The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y.”

For the past year and a half, Winks has been an instructor for the Advanced Culinary Skills Training courses at Fort Lee, Va., which is the hub of military foodservice operations and training. “We offer the only advanced culinary courses for all branches of service. We get chefs from the White House, the Pentagon and military dining facilities all over the world.”

Winks says one of the greatest opportunities the Army has given him is competing on the United States Army Culinary Arts Team (USACAT), which includes military chefs from all branches. “I’ve been on the team for two years, and have competed at the Culinary World Cup and the ‘culinary Olympics.’ We just got back from the Villeroy & Boch Culinary World Cup in Luxembourg in November.”

out to sea

In 1993, Master Chief Food Service Specialist (FSCM) Justin Reed, CEC, joined the

Coast Guard for a change of pace. His family owned a restaurant equipment business, but he did not envision it as his career path. After attending Sullivan County Community College in Lochsheldrake, N.Y., he joined the Coast Guard. When his superiors saw how natural cooking was for him, he was promoted to the top-cook position on the first ship he worked.

After working on a boat for two years, Reed attended the Coast Guard’s culinary school, Training Center Petaluma, in Petaluma, Calif. He was then stationed on a large Coast Guard cutter in Portsmouth, Va., for two years.

“I got picked by an admiral to be his personal chef,” says Reed of his next move in the military. “I had made a name for myself, so after he retired, I worked for three additional admirals in Virginia and Hawaii. I worked in their homes or quarters as their personal chef, and also cooked for their parties. I learned a lot more as a personal chef than I did working on a boat, because I had a lot more free time to train myself on fine dining.”

Ready for a new challenge, Reed joined a foodservice training team in Norfolk, Va., training 287 Coast Guard units on the

East Coast, teaching junior cooks better culinary techniques and menu development. After two years, he was selected to open the dining facility for the Director of Homeland Security in Washington, D.C., in 2006. There, he managed a staff of seven chefs and cooks and created all the menus in his role as manager and head chef.

For the past two years, Reed has served as lead instructor at the Joint Culinary Center of Excellence, Advanced Culinary Division, in Fort Lee, Va. He was recently promoted, and his next move will be in June to Petaluma, Calif., where he will run the Training Center Petaluma.

Like Winks, his success also has earned him a position on an international culinary competition team. In 2008, he served as USACAT's "culinary Olympics" team captain, and in 2010, he was a member of the USACAT team that competed in Luxembourg.

Reed says he chose the Coast Guard over other military branches because it is more exclusive, and is smaller and more personal. "There are 50,000 cooks in the Army, but there are only 40,000 Guardians, with 1,000 of them being cooks."

He advises students to leave options open for a career as a military chef. "I think you get better pay and better training than a chef in the civilian world. And, the military gives you leadership experience. To be a successful chef, you need to be a strong leader."

foundation for a second career

Entering the military, you are not guaranteed a certain position, although recruiters will analyze your interests and background. For Adams, although she didn't serve as a chef during her 20-year career with the Air Force, the skills she learned set the foundation for a second career in foodservice. "I was getting to the 17-year point, and planning to retire after 20 years," Adams says. "Early in my military career, my boss advised me that the military will always be my first career and that I need to think about my next one."

So, using the GI Bill, she decided to go to culinary school. "I attended Pikes Peak Community College at night while I was based at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs, Colo. I went to school part-time and still had my military day job."

During her time in the Air Force, she was a contracting officer who purchased equipment and supplies. "It was a stressful job, so I knew I wanted to do something fun for my second career."

In 2007, after getting her associate degree in culinary arts, she decided to start her own personal chef business, A Red Hot Dish ... and Great Food, Too, drawing on the business and accounting background she gained during her military experience. To beef up her résumé, she spent three months at the Italian Culinary Institute for Foreigners near Torino, Italy.

Adams remains connected to the military. In January, she volunteered with Cooking with the troops in Germany. Later this year, she will take part in a program in San Antonio to provide cooking classes for wounded soldiers.

"Many of them need a new career after injuries, and others need to learn how to cook for themselves. The military gave me the opportunity to have this training, and now I can give back." ■

Kathryn Kjarsgaard is a freelance food writer based in Forest Park, Ill.

by degrees

Fabricating Geoduck

By Michael Baldwin, CCE



Michael Baldwin, CCE, is a chef-instructor/coordinator at Bellingham Technical College, Bellingham, Wash., where he teaches meat fabrication and identification.

The Pacific Northwest provides a rich bounty of wild fish and shellfish species. The typical intertidal Northwest clams featured on menus are Manilas, Pacific littleneck, and butter and razor clams. Geoduck (pronounced gooey-duck) is a giant clam with a long siphon that is used to reach the surface to feed. Geoduck is wonderful raw or lightly cooked. It is sweet and delicious, but can become tough if overcooked. In China, geoduck is considered a delicacy, and it is consumed throughout Asia. Once a commercially dived and a controlled

wild harvest, geoduck has become more available in the U.S. Many farms commercially grow geoduck for the foodservice industry, making it sustainable and available live for chefs throughout the country all year long.

Geoducks inhabit the waters of Washington state and British Columbia, Canada, and is the largest burrowing clam in the world. Farmed geoduck is harvested at 6 years old and reach approximately two pounds, while the average age of geoduck harvested from the wild is 39, growing much larger, with siphons reaching more than three feet long.

Learning how to fabricate live geoduck provides students with the knowledge they will need in the future to provide the freshest possible product for their guests. Chefs use geoduck in numerous ways, from breaded and pan-fried piccata-style to geoduck fritter appetizers and, of course, as a ceviche or sushi. ■

step 1

Rinse geoduck in cold water, removing any sand.



step 2

Using a paring knife, cut along insides of the shell, pull out visceral mass (gills and stomach) and discard, leaving siphon and mantle. Plunge entire geoduck in boiling water for 8 seconds; dip in ice water. If blanched longer, it will become tough.



step 3

Using a paring knife, peel outer membrane from siphon and discard.



step 4

Butterfly lengthwise by inserting a paring knife. Wash siphon, removing all traces of sand and grit.



step 5

Siphon meat is firm and tough, and can be sliced thin at an angle or pounded gently with the smooth side of a meat mallet to tenderize into thin steaks for sautéing. The meat of the mantle/body is more tender than the siphon.



Written and demonstrated by Michael Baldwin, CCE.
Photography by Diane Padys, padyseye.com.
Geoduck provided by Taylor Shellfish Farms, Shelton, Wash.

ingredients

- Geoduck
- Salted water
- Fresh water

equipment

- Cut-resistant gloves
- Cutting board
- Latex gloves
- Mallet
- Paring knife

helpful hints

- The siphon is used in sushi (called mirugai). The mantle meat, which is more tender, is used for pan-frying, sautés and chowders. The siphon can be tenderized and quickly sautéed or pan-fried, as well.
- Geoducks, like other shellfish, must be kept alive.
- To store, place damp towel over geoduck and keep at 38°F. Shelf life is 3-4 days.
- The shellfish tag record must be kept for 90 days.
- Cover cut-resistant gloves with latex gloves.

Opposite: Geoduck and watermelon ceviche uses the mantle meat of the geoduck, one PureHeart watermelon brunoise, lemon juice, shallot brunoise, fresh tomato brunoise, fresh jalapeño brunoise, chopped fresh cilantro, 1 minced garlic clove, 1 tablespoon of olive oil, and salt and pepper.

grill

Peter Aiello, CEC, CEPC

By *Becky Marmorato*



At age 13, Peter Aiello, CEC, CEPC worked as a busboy at a fine-dining Italian restaurant in Denver. By 16, he'd made it into the kitchen, and at 23, he landed his first chef position. After moving to New York to attend The Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, N.Y., Aiello worked at country clubs, restaurants and a conference center for 11 years before his love of the Rocky Mountains brought him back to Colorado. Now he owns Alpine Chef, a catering company in Colorado Springs, and serves as one of the American Culinary Federation Education Foundation (ACFEF) Apprenticeship Program's eight Area Regional Trainers (ARTs).

when did you get involved with the ACFEF Apprenticeship Program?

pa: I became a sponsoring chef for the program while working at Antlers Hilton Colorado Springs.

what has the experience of working with apprentices been like?

pa: When I had apprentices, I organized advanced demos for them to attend along with my staff. This gave them a hunger to learn more. Nothing is more satisfying for a chef than for an apprentice who worked hard to complete the program call, years later, just to say, "Thanks for all you did for me." That makes all the effort worthwhile.

when it comes to getting a job, is apprenticeship equal to other forms of education?

pa: As an executive chef, I interview many applicants for positions. Ultimately, the one who gets the job is the candidate who has

diverse experiences in the kitchen. Apprenticeship offers the opportunity to learn many skills that may otherwise take 10 years to acquire.

what were your thoughts when you were asked to become an ART?

pa: I was excited to help bring the apprenticeship program logbook into the 21st century. One of the most tedious tasks for the apprentice and the sponsoring chef is maintaining the book. The new online portal is amazing. My role is to help properties transition from the old logbook to the portal, and to provide feedback to improve the portal.

beyond the apprenticeship program, how are you involved with ACF?

pa: I worked hard to become one of Colorado's first certified practical examiners. In the past 10 years, I have served on ACF Pikes Peak Chapter's board of directors as treasurer, vice president, president,

chairman of the board and now as sergeant-at-arms.

what is the value of member organizations?

pa: Being a member of a culinary organization has wonderful benefits. Sharing culinary knowledge, networking, finding mentors—or being a mentor for aspiring culinarians—sourcing new foods and vendors ... the list goes on.

do you think the apprenticeship program's station rotation is beneficial?

pa: I always move my cooks around in the kitchen to cross-train them. This helps when someone calls in sick, as I have cooks who can jump into a position and perform flawlessly so customers get the quality they expect. This also positions the cook for advancement. Apprenticeship is designed with rotations for this very reason.

what aspects of the online apprenticeship portal are most beneficial?

pa: Students can access their complete logbook from any computer with Internet access. The portal offers videos, tips, step-by-step instructions, discussion forums and the ability to stay in touch with fellow apprentices.

would you recommend the ACFEF Apprenticeship Program to students seeking a career path?

pa: Most definitely. I am a firm believer that the most effective way to solidify culinary skills and techniques is hands-on experience in an operating kitchen. Serving customers in a low-volume or high-volume setting gives students an edge compared with someone who is only taught in the classroom.

what do you think are the biggest challenges students entering the culinary field today face?

pa: While the explosion of celebrity chefs, reality-chef challenges and cooking shows has popularized the culinary industry, for the majority of cooks entering this field, it means working nights, weekends, holidays and long hours on your feet in a fast-paced and often hot environment. That is the reality.

what recommendations would you make to improve the program?

pa: Create an advanced apprenticeship program for culinarians aspiring to reach an even higher level of achievement. This could focus more on management, wine knowledge, culinary accounting and hospitality law. ■

advice for future apprentices

- Understand that apprenticeship is a full-time commitment, at work and at home.
- Keep your logbook up-to-date weekly.
- Use the online portal, <http://culinaryprofessionals.org/>, to its full potential.
- Communicate with your program coordinator.
- Attend required classes.
- The key to success is keeping your eye on the prize when you face tough days.

more information

To learn more about the ACFEF Apprenticeship Program, visit www.acfchefs.org and select "schools" then "apprenticeships."

taste test

Empowering Students

Pikes Peak Community College's culinary program evolves to meet students' needs.

By Robert Hudson, CEC, CCE



Above: Students in Pikes Peak Community College's wedding cake class.

Opposite left: Harvest from the school's community garden goes to its culinary program and students in need.

Opposite right: In 2008, the school's Culinary Arts Club built a community garden on a vacant area of the campus.

A common myth about culinary students is that they will be chefs once they graduate.

Most chefs agree it takes years of experience in different kitchens and working with various foods and menus to gain the skills needed to become an executive chef or working chef in a kitchen. Culinary training is a great way to start the process, but it is just the beginning. And, there are many training options. Some students enter apprenticeship programs, others attend proprietary institutions, and still others enroll in technical or community colleges. Each path is unique and offers different benefits.

shifting focus

At Pikes Peak Community College, Colorado Springs, Colo., the school's culinary program has altered its goal in recent years. It went from aiming to produce chefs to focusing on training students who are employable.

The college's foodservice management program started in the late 1960s

when most people wanted to go into management. Those who were interested in cooking often opted for apprenticeship programs. In 2000, the school began to see a massive shift in enrollment—the management program enrollment dropped to extremely low levels, and interest in cooking was on the rise. In 2003, the school started a certificate program in culinary arts. The program grew from one certificate with 10 students to three degrees and four specialized program certificates, with nearly 500 students.

The culinary program earned accreditation through the American Culinary Federation Education Foundation (ACFEF) in 2005. Students can now choose from an AAS Culinary Arts degree, AAS Baking and Pastry degree, AAS Food Service Management degree, Culinary Basic Skills certificate, Culinary One Year certificate, Baking certificate or Management certificate. Classes are taught by 11 faculty members, each with more than 15 years of industry experience.

the school's makeup

More than 10,000 students attend Pikes Peak Community College, with the Centennial campus in Colorado Springs the largest in the region. With a location next to the Fort Carson Army base, and with two Air Force bases in Colorado Springs, many military personnel and their spouses enroll in the college. In addition, 100 high school students take lecture and lab courses to earn high school and college credits. Due to the program's growth, the school recently underwent a \$1.4 million renovation.

At Pikes Peak Community College, students are the customers. This year, the school plans to develop a fourth degree that focuses on healthy cuisine, vegetarian foods and sustainability in response to the growing number of students interested in working at retirement centers, nursing homes, institutional feeding establishments, hospitals and day care centers.

"The instructors are great. They don't let you slide," says culinary student Dominic Kassahn. "If you show up to lab without your proper uniform, you are told to go home. Each class has a rotating student sous chef who assists in labs. It's a great way to learn what it is like to be a manager."

student initiatives

Students are active in the community as members of ACF Pikes Peak Chapter Inc., the local chapter of the American Culinary Federation (ACF), and the college's Culinary Arts Club. In 2008, student government president



Nathan Dirnberger and fellow students developed a community garden on a vacant area of land on campus. There, students grow vegetables and herbs to supplement the culinary program's purchases. Excess harvest supplies the student pantry, which gives food and toiletries to students in need.

Students are also active competitors. In 2005, the culinary program established its first ACF student competition team, and in 2009, fielded its first ACF Baron H. Galand Culinary Knowledge Bowl team.

More than 1,000 students have graduated from Pikes Peak Community College's culinary program. Community colleges can be an affordable start to one's career. Because students often don't know where they want to be in 10 years, the program teaches fundamental skills. Once they know the basics, it is up to students to decide their futures. ■

Robert Hudson, CEC, CCE, is department chair at Pikes Peak Community College, Colorado Springs, Colo., and is chair of the ACFF Accrediting Commission.



more information

To learn more about Pikes Peak Community College, Colorado Springs, Colo., visit www.ppsc.edu.

events

ACF Regional Conferences

Destinations: New Orleans and Scottsdale, Ariz.



Each year, the American Culinary Federation (ACF) Events Series takes place in five cities across the country, offering educational and networking opportunities for students and chefs. At each conference and convention, attendees enjoy live cooking demonstrations, seminars, a trade show and competitions. ACF has already stopped in Atlanta, where attendees heard from regional experts on topics ranging from Moroccan cuisine to craft beer. Next, chefs and students in the Northeast will head to Columbus, Ohio, March 20-23, for the Northeast Regional Conference, which includes a special day for ProStart students during which high

school students interested in culinary arts will attend seminars and events geared toward their age group.

Now, let's look at what awaits attendees at the Central and Western Regional Conferences.

escape to the big easy

This year's Central Regional Conference is hosted by ACF New Orleans Chapter and takes place at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside, New Orleans, April 17-20. Learn about the city's world-famous cuisine, a combination of Creole and French with ingredients from around the world. From jambalaya to gumbo and from po' boys to beignets, a visit to New Orleans offers an unforgettable culinary journey.

During the conference, you'll hear from some of the South's most respected chefs, including John Folse, CEC, AAC, HBOT, owner of Chef John Folse & Company, who will demonstrate traditional Cajun and Creole dishes. Paul Prudhomme, HAAC, HHOF, owner of Magic Seasoning Blends and K-Paul's Louisiana Kitchen, will also demonstrate

Top left: John Folse, CEC, AAC, HBOT

Top right: Paul Prudhomme, HAAC, HHOF

Bottom left: Susan Spicer

Bottom right: Tory McPhail

some of his famous recipes. Susan Spicer, owner of the French Quarter's Bayona, will offer a modern twist on New Orleans cuisine as she explores the role of global flavors on local menus. Finally, Tory McPhail, executive chef at Commander's Palace Restaurant, will host the keynote address during General Session, April 18.

a western getaway

The Western Regional Conference, hosted by ACF Chefs Association of Arizona, Inc., takes place in the Grand Canyon state at the recently opened Talking Stick Resort, Scottsdale, Ariz., April 29-May 2. Just 10 minutes from downtown Phoenix, after the day's events are over, attendees will enjoy the city's numerous restaurants, nightlife and breathtaking outdoors. Topics for seminars and demonstrations range from global flavors to nutrition. The trade show takes place April 30.

invest in your future

Money is tight for many students, so ACF is making its regional conferences more affordable to attend. The Rewards Rate of \$260 is available for ACF



student members in good standing who register by the early registration deadline (March 4 for the Central conference or March 18 for the Western conference) and stay a minimum of three nights at the official conference hotel. The Early Registration Rate for students for each conference is \$350. The Standard Registration Rate for full registration for each conference is \$500.

Not looking to attend the entire conference? No problem ... a la carte registration is available for specific events or for \$125 for each day. To learn more about this year's conferences, and to register, visit www.acfchefs.org/events. ■

student competitions

Students from each region will go head-to-head in several regional competitions in New Orleans and Scottsdale, Ariz., in hopes of advancing to the national competitions during the 2011 ACF National Convention in Dallas in July. Here's a look at the student competitions.

- Baron H. Galand Culinary Knowledge Bowl: April 19; April 30
- ACF Regional Student Chef of the Year competition: April 19; April 30
- ACF Regional Student Team Championship: April 19-20; April 30-May 1

Be sure to visit www.acfchefs.org following each conference to meet your region's champions.

Top: The Talking Stick Resort, Scottsdale, Ariz.

Bottom: A view of the French Quarter in New Orleans.

BE LIKE “MIKE” CONTEST

Enter and you could **WIN A TRIP**
to the **2011 ACF NATIONAL**
CONVENTION in Dallas, Texas,
to **SHADOW ACF NATIONAL**
PRESIDENT MICHAEL TY,
CEC, AAC.



Submit an essay describing why you aspire to be a culinary leader and how shadowing ACF National President Michael Ty, CEC, AAC, during the 2011 ACF National Convention will help you reach your goal.

Five finalists will be selected for a conference call interview with Chef Ty; one winner will be named. Winner will be announced June 13. Winner will attend the 2011 ACF National Convention, July 22-26, in Dallas, Texas, and will shadow Chef Ty. Airfare, accommodations and full registration will be provided.

CONTEST GUIDELINES

- All essays—completed, signed and accompanied by the necessary documents—must be postmarked by May 4, 2011, and mailed to:
Be Like “Mike” contest
Attn: Patricia Carroll, Communications
American Culinary Federation
180 Center Place Way, St. Augustine, FL 32095
- Must be an ACF member in good standing since Dec. 31, 2010, and at least 18 years old.
- Must be either a first-, second- or third-year full-time culinary student enrolled in either a degree-granting, diploma or certificate postsecondary culinary program, or an apprentice in an ACFEF Apprenticeship Program.
- Application must be completed and signed.
- Submit a color photo in the appropriate chef apparel and toque in 300 dpi resolution.
- Signed letter of endorsement from the student’s department chair and/or school/apprenticeship director on letterhead must accompany the application and essay.



ESSAY REQUIREMENTS

- No more than 500 words, in English.
 - Typed, no smaller than 12pt font.
 - No bold or underline. Do not use charts, tables or graphs.
 - Must be an original work prepared by the culinary student or apprentice.
-
- Student must be available July 21-27, 2011, to attend 2011 ACF National Convention in Dallas, Texas. Guests are not allowed to accompany the winner.
 - All submissions become the property of ACF.
 - ACF reserves the right to contact faculty or administrators at any entrant’s school or apprenticeship program to confirm enrollment and verify endorsement. In the event that enrollment or endorsement letter cannot be confirmed, entrant will be disqualified from the contest.
 - Entrants agree, by signing a release waiver, to allow ACF to post their essays on www.acfchefs.org and use their names and essays in promotional materials for publicity purposes. ACF will give appropriate attribution. Compensation will not be provided.
 - Failure to follow the contest guidelines and essay requirements may lead to disqualification from the contest.

Personal Information

Last name: _____ First name: _____
ACF member number: _____ Date joined ACF (National): _____
Birthdate: _____ SSN: _____
Home address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Home phone: _____ Work phone: _____
Cell phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Current Culinary Education

Educational institution name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Date of enrollment: _____ Anticipated graduation date: _____
Degree pursued: _____
Department chair's name: _____ Phone number: _____
Title: _____

ACFEF Apprenticeship Program

ACFEF Apprenticeship Program name: _____
ACFEF Apprenticeship Program type: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Date of enrollment: _____ Anticipated Completion Date: _____
Current status/Hours completed: _____
Apprenticeship director's name: _____ Phone number: _____
Title: _____

Current Employment

Name of Employer: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone Number: _____
Job Title: _____
Immediate supervisor's name: _____ Phone number: _____
Title: _____

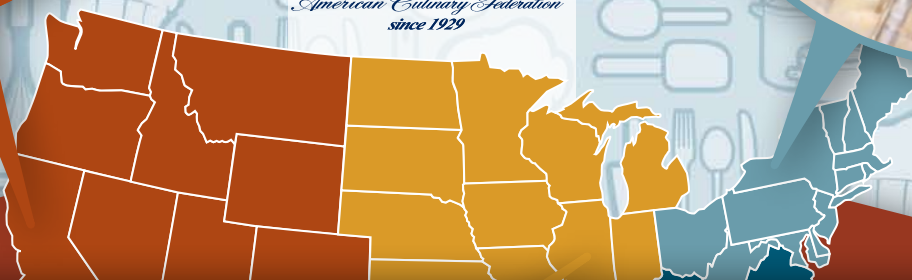
I hereby certify that the information I have submitted is correct. Furthermore, I grant permission to the American Culinary Federation and its subsidiaries to use the information included in my application and essay in print and electronically for promotional purposes. I understand that I will not be compensated and that I may not be notified of each use.

Applicant Signature

Date



STUDENTS,
GET COOKING!
APPLY BY
MAY 13, 2011



STUDENT CULINARIAN INVITATIONAL APPLICATION



ALL STUDENT CULINARIANS 18 YEARS AND OLDER

are invited to apply to participate in the American Culinary Federation's (ACF) premier Student Culinarian Invitational, a culinary event designed to foster mentorship and nurture culinary excellence. Taking place July 23, 2011, at the ACF national convention at the Gaylord Texan in Dallas, the reception/dinner will feature five teams: four two-person teams and their mentors representing each of the four ACF regions and one at large team preparing the cuisine that best represents their region.

FIVE LUCKY TEAMS

will win full registration to attend the 2011 ACF National Convention and stay at the Gaylord Texan, July 22-26, 2011. "Experience the Power of Connection" as you learn from industry leaders and network with your peers. Enjoy a private reception with ACF leaders and special guests. Plus, teams will travel, with complimentary airfare and registration, to the 2012 World Association of Chefs Societies International Congress in Daejeon, South Korea, May 1-5, 2012. Rally your chapter's support and enter by May 13, 2011, for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED MAY 31, 2011

www.acfchefs.org

STUDENT CULINARIAN INVITATIONAL APPLICATION

STUDENT INVITATIONAL GUIDELINES

- Applicants must be U.S. citizens, at least 18 years old and paid up ACF student culinarian members as of March 31, 2011. If older than 25 by May 1, 2012, applicants can only participate in the ACF convention, not the 2012 WACS International Congress, in keeping with WACS' definition of a student culinarian.
- Each two-person team must have an ACF chapter chef mentor who is a paid up ACF member. The mentor will act as the team's coach and will work closely with team members before and during the reception/dinner.
- Applicants do not have to be currently enrolled in a culinary program or an apprenticeship program.
- Teams must submit recipes for two menu items, an appetizer and entrée or entrée and dessert. Teams will serve 100 tasting portions of each menu item at the reception.
- Recipes must represent their region's cuisine and be in standard format, including a yield of 8 portions, ingredient list and quantity, preparation method, cooking method and time.
- Photos must accompany each recipe.
- Teams must submit a signed letter of endorsement from their ACF chapter president. Teams must provide their airfare and solicit support for the food products featured on their menu. Donated products from local companies can be noted on the 8"x10" menu at each station.
- Students must be available July 22-26, 2011, to attend the 2011 ACF National Convention in Dallas.
- ACF will provide full convention registration and hotel accommodations at the Gaylord Texan, July 22-26, 2011, for the students only. The chapter chef mentor must pay for his/her own convention registration and hotel stay.
- A digital color photo of each applicant, the mentor and the team in appropriate chef apparel and toque in 300 dpi resolution and at least 1 MB in size must be submitted.
- Failure to follow the guidelines may lead to disqualification.
- **All applications—signed and accompanied by recipes, photos, bios and signed chapter president endorsement letter—must be postmarked by May 13, 2011, and mailed to:**

STUDENT CULINARIAN INVITATIONAL

Attn.: Leah Craig
Communications Manager
American Culinary Federation
180 Center Place Way
St. Augustine, FL 32095

Further details, including a timeline and equipment available to teams at the dinner, will be provided when teams are selected. Winners will sign a release waiver for the 2012 WACS International Congress, understanding that plans may change if safety concerns arise. Airfare to South Korea will be provided from within the U.S.

CHAPTER INFORMATION

Chapter name: _____ Chapter ID: _____ Region: _____

President's name (printed): _____

President's preferred phone number: _____

CHAPTER CHEF MENTOR INFORMATION:

Name (printed): _____

ACF member ID (required): _____ Date joined ACF: _____

Name of employer: _____ Title: _____

Work address: _____

Work city/state/zip: _____

Preferred e-mail address: _____ Preferred phone number: _____

Home address: _____

Home city/state/zip: _____

STUDENT CULINARIAN INVITATIONAL APPLICATION

STUDENT BIO



Each student must attach a bio, no more than 500 words, in English, explaining why you decided to enter the culinary industry, what your experience has been like thus far, why you would like to be selected for the Student Culinarian Invitational and why you would like to attend the 2012 WACS International Congress. In addition, outline your career goals and dreams.

STUDENT 1 INFORMATION:

Name (printed): _____

ACF member ID (required): _____ Date joined ACF: _____

Birthdate: _____ SSN: _____

Are you currently in school/culinary apprenticeship (check one)? YES NO

If yes, where? _____

City/state/zip: _____

Anticipated graduation date (if applicable): _____

Are you currently employed in the foodservice industry (check one)? YES NO

If yes, where? _____

City/state/zip: _____

Immediate supervisor's name: _____

Supervisor's title: _____

Supervisor's phone number: _____ Supervisor's e-mail address: _____

Preferred phone number: _____ Preferred e-mail address: _____

Home address: _____

Home city/state/zip: _____

STUDENT 2 INFORMATION:

Name (printed): _____

ACF member ID (required): _____ Date joined ACF: _____

Birthdate: _____ SSN: _____

Are you currently in school/culinary apprenticeship (check one)? YES NO

If yes, where? _____

City/state/zip: _____

Anticipated graduation date (if applicable): _____

Are you currently employed in the foodservice industry (check one)? YES NO

If yes, where? _____

City/state/zip: _____

Immediate supervisor's name: _____

Supervisor's title: _____

Supervisor's phone number: _____ Supervisor's e-mail address: _____

Preferred phone number: _____ Preferred e-mail address: _____

Home address: _____

Home city/state/zip: _____

STUDENT CULINARIAN INVITATIONAL APPLICATION

STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT *Please have both students (S1/S2) and chapter chef mentor (CCM) initial each section.*

CCM S1 S2 I agree to be present July 23, 2011, at the Student Culinarian Invitational Reception/Dinner at the 2011 ACF National Convention in Dallas, July 22-26, 2011.

_____ I understand I am responsible for securing airfare to Dallas.

_____ I understand that my chapter and I are responsible for supplying the food needed for the 100 tasting portions of each menu item of my team's recipes.

_____ I agree to seek support from my community and local/regional food providers to assist in acquiring the food needed for the reception/dinner.

_____ I agree that the two recipes included are my team's original work.

_____ I understand that I will room with fellow Student Culinarian Invitational winners of the same gender at the Gaylord Texan during the 2011 ACF National Convention.

CCM S1 S2 At the dinner, I agree to wear a white chef coat with only the ACF/my chapter's logo, a white neckerchief, black or checkered pants, a white apron, side towels and chef hat.

_____ I grant permission for ACF to use my recipes and photos for promotional purposes in press releases, magazines and on its website, www.acfchefs.org.

_____ I agree to represent ACF in a positive light during the 2011 ACF National Convention and 2012 WACS International Congress, May 1-5, 2012.

_____ I understand that if safety issues arise, plans to attend the 2012 WACS International Congress in Daejeon, South Korea, may change.

_____ I understand that, if selected, I will sign the necessary waivers before attending the 2012 WACS International Congress in South Korea.



Student 1 signature : _____ Date: _____

Student 2 signature : _____ Date: _____

Chapter chef mentor signature: _____ Date: _____

Chapter president signature: _____ Date: _____

international flavors

Chile

A world of flavors waits in an undiscovered gem where sustainability comes naturally.

By Klaus Tenbergen, Ed.D., CEPC, CMB, ASBPB, MCFE



In 2010, a recipe contest caught my eye. Normally I don't enter write-in competitions, but with the grand prize of an all-expenses-paid trip to Chile, I decided to enter Chilean Fresh Fruit Association's 2009-2010 Fresh 'n' Fit Recipe Contest. I was astonished when I was named the grand-prize winner for my *pollo ajonjoli* with Chilean Asian pear chutney and blueberry balsamic reduction. My recipe placed first in the Fresh Fruit Dinner category and the Best of Blues Dinner category. My chilled blueberry and peach soup won the Best of Blues Lunch category. In January, I headed to

Chile to learn about the country's fresh fruit industry and its cuisine.

Living in Fresno, Calif., in the middle of Central Valley, one of the world's most productive agricultural regions, I understand how fruits and vegetables influence our daily lives. Visiting Chile meant going to a country many see as competition. But my attitude quickly changed once I realized that, as an educator, it is important to expose students to all opportunities. My visit to Chile was eye-opening, and the knowledge I gained will benefit my students at California State University, Fresno.

Top: A view of Chile.

Opposite left: Chile is the second largest producer of salmon in the world.

Opposite right: Flank steak at De Pellín y Coigüe Parrilla Restaurant, Futrono, Chile.



Chile and California are in opposite hemispheres, so summertime in California is winter in Chile, and vice versa. Chile's climate and topography is similar to California's, and both grow similar crops. Opposite growing seasons provide the U.S. with a year-round supply of fresh fruits and vegetables.

In addition to learning about the country's fruit industry, as a chef, I was curious about Chilean cuisine and its use of seafood, beef, vegetables and fruit. I discovered recipes such as *curantos*, a dish made with shellfish, meat, potatoes and other vegetables;



sopaipillas, a fried pastry; *pastel de choclo*, ground beef casserole; empanadas and *asado*, barbecue. I also learned about foods brought over by German colonists, such as beer, mayonnaise, yogurt and *kuchen*, a type of cake. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw a menu page at Bavaria in Calama, written in German.

food culture

Many American restaurant franchises, from Dunkin' Donuts to Taco Bell and from Pizza Hut to KFC, can be found in food courts of major shopping centers in Santiago de Chile, the country's capital. To my surprise, the

chile's fruit season in U.S.

Thanks to Chile's opposite growing season, summertime fruit can be enjoyed throughout the year in the U.S. Here's a look at the country's fruit exports and availability:

- **Apples:**
February–July
- **Avocados:**
September–January
- **Blueberries:**
November–April
- **Cherries:**
November–January
- **Clementines:**
May–July
- **Kiwifruit:**
November; mid-March–September
- **Nectarines:**
November–March
- **Peaches:**
November–March
- **Pears:**
January–July
- **Plums:**
Mid-November–mid-April
- **Raspberries:**
Mid-November–May
- **Table grapes:**
Mid-November–May

Source: Chilean Fresh Fruit Association



Top: *Lúcuma* is one of Chile's lesser-known fruits.
Bottom left: Chile is the primary wintertime source of fresh grapes for the U.S. and Canada.
Bottom right: *Copao* is an acidic fruit that comes from wild cactus.
Opposite: *Lúcuma* pie

longest lines were at the ice cream and frozen yogurt stands, where patrons waited up to 30 minutes to savor the cool treats.

For one of our dinners, we ate at Mestizo in Santiago de Chile, a great open-air restaurant with a view overlooking a downtown park. The appetizers, main courses and desserts were superb, representing upscale Chilean cuisine. Our meals were prepared by a brigade of line cooks. The steaks were cooked over an open fire. Here, I discovered that Chilean plates do not include vegetables, only a protein and starch. Vegetables are ordered separately or consumed in a salad.

Restaurante Montealegre, located next to Casa Higuera in Valparaíso, offers a breathtaking view of Porto de Valparaíso. The company, ambiance and food made for an unforgettable lunch. We enjoyed a set menu with interesting flavor combinations and artfully presented dishes, including salmon encrusted with olives, king crab casserole—a rich confection of cream, tomato and small flakes of crab—and a pasta dish with goat cheese and pancetta tortellini. I finished my lunch with a double espresso and *lúcuma* mousse.

A 90-minute flight south of Santiago de Chile took us to a blueberry farm, packaging house and USDA inspection facility. After a busy morning of tours, we enjoyed lunch at De Pellín y Coigüe Parrilla Restaurant in Futrono, on the northern shore of Lake Ranco. It was here that I had the best flank steak ever, prepared over an open flame grill and seasoned to perfection only with salt.

chile's unique fruits

After tasting several dishes and desserts made with Chile's *lúcuma*, I fell in love with the fruit and its flavor. This fruit is also called "egg fruit," referring to its dry flesh that has a similar texture to a hard-boiled egg yolk. The flavor is unique, similar to maple and sweet potato. *Lúcuma* is popular as a dried powder flavoring, often used for ice cream.

While in Chile's Los Lagos region at the side of the Andes mountains, we



stayed at Termas Puyehue Wellness & Spa Resort, a natural sanctuary of beautiful forests, rivers and lakes, with great food and hospitality.

Back in Santiago, we visited Culinary, a culinary school. There, chef Juan Pablo Mellado Arana introduced us to a wild cactus fruit known as *copao*, or “eulychnia acida,” which is acidic and has a similar texture to kiwifruit. It is almost unknown, but has great culinary potential.

defining chilean cuisine

When I asked Jeffrey Anderson, chef and director of culinary innovation at Phoenix-based Safeway Inc., what his experience was like during our stay in Chile, he said the cuisine of Chile is not easily described, but that it is effortlessly enjoyed. Ingredients take center stage and are often featured in the simplest manner. Meats are cooked to perfection over an open flame. Fish is abundant, fresh and flavorful. Ripe vegetables, harvested in season, are easy to enjoy. There are no hothouse tomatoes here; instead, they are mouthwatering and summer-ripe, soft to the touch and ready to eat. The

salsa-like garnish known as *pebre* takes advantage of the summer’s harvest and is on every table, providing a great accompaniment to any meal.

But best of all, Anderson says, are Chilean fruits, especially the blueberries, picked fresh from the shrub. The Legacy variety is succulent and sweet, almost like candy. Other fruit memories that still linger with Anderson are the smell of peaches and nectarines bursting with flavor that urge you to make a cobbler or shortcake with rich whipped cream.

I learned so much about Chile’s cuisine and fresh fruit industry during my short visit. Chile’s impact on global cuisine is obvious. Its agricultural products have been, and will be, a household mainstay for many centuries to come. ■

Klaus Tenbergen, Ed.D., CEPC, CMB, ASBPB, MCFE, is the Culinology® program director and an assistant professor in the Department of Food Science and Nutrition at California State University, Fresno, Calif.

did you know?

- Chile is a narrow strip of land, 2,700 miles long on South America’s Pacific coast.
- The country shares borders with Argentina, Bolivia and Peru.
- The country’s population (July 2010 estimate) is 16,746,491.
- Chile is slightly smaller than twice the size of Montana.
- The official language of Chile is Spanish.
- The country’s currency is the Chilean peso.
- Chile offers a wide range of temperatures, with desert in the North, Mediterranean in the Central region and cool and damp in the South.
- Chile has low coastal mountains, a fertile central valley and the Andes mountain range in the east.
- Grapes, apples, pears, onions, wheat, corn, oats, peaches, garlic, asparagus, beans, beef, poultry, wool, fish and timber are Chile’s agricultural products.
- In the past 16 years, fresh fruit exports from Chile to North America have increased more than 700 percent.
- Chile is the primary wintertime source (more than 95 percent) of fresh grapes for the U.S. and Canada.

Sources: The World Factbook by the Central Intelligence Agency; Chilean Fresh Fruit Association

Youth Team USA

Like Family

Training for the 2012 “culinary Olympics,” members of ACF Culinary Youth Team USA balance the pressure of competition with support from others and a little fun.

By Precious Vida Yamaguchi, Ph.D.



Top: Shawn Hanlin, CEC, third from left, and ACF Culinary Youth Team USA members, from left to right: Brittney Garner Cummings, Reilly Meehan, Edalyn Garcia, Alfonso Mendoza, Samantha Lyn Caves and Maddie Cutts.

Bottom: A sampling of the team’s dessert display at the ACF Culinary Youth Team USA tryouts.

Sometimes, our best introductions to new food and people begin with a happy ending, and by “happy ending,” I mean dessert. On a recent evening, I sat in the dining room at Randy Torres’ home in Coos Bay, Ore., along with four ACF Culinary Youth Team USA team members, after an indulgent five-course Cuban meal. I was surprised how quickly I felt at home with this group of people who acted, spoke and treated each other more like a family than a competitive “culinary Olympics” youth team training to represent the U.S. in Germany in 2012.

We sat back in our chairs in a euphoric food coma, and though we

proclaimed we were all full, in unison our eyes lit up when it was time for dessert: two kinds of cupcakes created by team members. It was the perfect ending to a wonderful meal.

Going the extra mile is nothing new to the youth team, which comprises five official members—Samantha Lyn Caves, Maddie Cutts, Alfonso Mendoza, Reilly Meehan and Edalyn Garcia, team captain—and its supporting member, Brittney Garner Cummings. They are all 19-23 years old, and each member finds ways to balance academics at Oregon Coast Culinary Institute (OCCI), Coos Bay, “culinary Olympics” training, jobs, families and personal lives, and are dedicated to cooking creatively, skillfully and competitively together daily.

“I am doing something I love,” says Garcia, 23, who was born in the Philippines and grew up in California. “We are definitely a family.”

Team members come from various backgrounds, and not only different parts of the U.S., but different parts

of the world, Torres says. Mendoza, 21, was born in Arizona, but spent his childhood and teenage years in Mexico, where he cooked with his mother and, eventually, in the kitchens of several restaurants. “I remember when I was only 12, I was cooking a bouillabaisse, and I was running back and forth from my house to the small store on the corner to buy ingredients for my dish, Mendoza says. He adds that his experience on the team has helped him grow, as well as become more organized and driven.

Like Mendoza, Cutts, 19, remembers her first cooking experiences as a child at home, where she made “awful” brownies out of cookie dough and brownie mix. She has come a long way. As the youngest member of the team, she has developed her cooking techniques through Torres’ mentorship, the team’s support and “a lot of trial and error.”

Being a member on a competitive culinary team has not been easy for anyone, Cutts says. “Last week, I was walking around like a zombie, having

worked 19 days straight on only three hours of sleep a night.” Sleep or no sleep, Cutts identifies her place on the team as “an honor.”

Team members have made a commitment to devote a significant amount of time and energy and a portion of their lives to competitive cooking. “Balance is really hard,” says Caves, 21. “Some days, I find it, some days, I don’t, but we all do it together.”

As the team’s supporting member, and the only member who is married and has a young child, Cummings, 23, helps the team accomplish its goals and assists with its fundraising efforts.

The youth team members praise the leadership and mentoring of Torres, who leads the team along with its manager, Alex Darvishi, CEC, AAC, who lives in Houston. Meehan, 20, advises aspiring culinary students who want to cook competitively to “find a good mentor. That’s the only reason I’m here.” Though Meehan has been cooking in his father’s

restaurant since he was 12, he believes his experience on the team is invaluable. “The way I look at food now is completely different. It’s so much deeper.”

As the team prepares for a competition in Las Vegas in March, Shawn Hanlin, CEC, executive director of OCCI, observes their growth, “I can see the team’s progression and their diligence. They are definitely keeping up with their timeline and practice. You can’t underestimate the need to practice. You can’t just wish it to happen.”

Whether in the kitchens of OCCI, the various restaurants where team members work, or at home, members of ACF Culinary Youth Team USA devote their lives to supporting each other. Their laughter, enthusiasm, and the brotherly/sisterly teasing represent something more than just a competitive cooking team. They have become like a family. ■

Precious Yamaguchi, Ph.D., is a speech communication instructor at Southwestern Oregon Community College, Coos Bay, Ore.

the interview

François Kwaku-Dongo

By Ethel Hammer



Krishna Dayanichi

born

Botro, Ivory Coast, Africa

resides

Greenwich, Conn.

learned the trade

Busboy/delivery boy, Famous Ray's, New York, 1981; rose from night cleaner to dishwasher to sous chef, Alo Alo, New York, 1982-1983; started at salad station, rose to sous chef, Remi, New York, 1984-1989; rose from pasta cook (1990-1992) to sous chef (1991-1993) to executive chef (1994-1996), Spago, Los Angeles; eight-week culinary exchange in Provence, Loire and Burgundy, France, 1996; executive chef/partner, Spago, Chicago, 1996-2004; corporate chef, Lettuce Entertain You, Chicago, 2005; executive chef, L'Escale, Greenwich, Conn., 2005-present.

awards/achievements

Cooked at James Beard House, New York, 1993, 2003, 2005 and 2009; James Beard Award nominee, 2008; "Iron Chef America" contestant, battling Michael Symon, 2009; Great Chefs honoree, Greenwich Hospital, Greenwich, Conn., 2009; speaks French, English, Portuguese and Spanish.

François Kwaku-Dongo cannot stop learning. Married to a librarian, Kwaku-Dongo hopes to found the equivalent of the Library of Congress in his homeland, the Ivory Coast. When he speaks of his desire to create "a culinary institute of Africa" in Africa, or of his early goal to become another Oprah Winfrey, or of growing his Milwaukee chocolate company Omanhene into the equivalent of Hershey's, what can you say? This man might well be the world's most enthusiastic dreamer.

Today, as executive chef at L'Escale in tiny, exclusive Greenwich, Conn., Kwaku-Dongo is flying high, feeding financial movers, shakers and hedge fund operators who glide up to his restaurant in their yachts. "It's like I'm going to Harvard's or Yale's business schools without paying tuition," he says.

But even when he wasn't feeding powerhouses, Kwaku-Dongo kept his wits about him. Imagine Kwaku-Dongo, born in the small Ivory Coast village of Botro, leaving his homeland at age 24 for New York. He is no longer the esteemed grandson of a local tribal chief who was the owner of a pineapple

plantation, but a lowly bicycle messenger delivering pizzas for Famous Ray's.

Envision what it takes not to know English, not to know American customs, never to have cooked in your life, then, nine years later, to emerge as a protégé of Wolfgang Puck, who subsequently asked him to take over as executive chef at his flagship Spago in Los Angeles. "I was blown away by Wolfgang's operation. It was like a great cooking school," says Kwaku-Dongo, who first came to Los Angeles in 1990, thanks to his friendship with Puck's brother Klaus. Soon, Ruth Reichl (restaurant critic for the *Los Angeles Times* from 1984-1993) would credit him with adding artisanal pastas to Spago's culinary lineup.

In 1996, Puck asked Kwaku-Dongo to be his partner at Spago in Chicago, a restaurant with multicultural influences that ultimately closed because the space was too big, the food was not "Chicago" enough and patrons felt slighted because Puck was rarely there. Suddenly, Kwaku-Dongo, the A+ student, had new lessons to learn.

Now in Connecticut, cooking French Provençal food in the center of prosperity, you have to ask yourself, "What does this man understand about navigating the world? Who is this man with the smile of an angel and the crafty inner knowledge of a fox, one so deeply endowed with a commitment to learning and sharing?"

The beauty of François Kwaku-Dongo lies not only in his remarkable story, but also in his determination to pass his knowledge on.

"I am interested in human beings. The extent of the human faculties blows my mind," he says. "Many languages are spoken in the world, yet we all want the same things. In Africa, everything is passed on orally, and when people die, their knowledge goes with them. Nothing is learned. But Italians are proud of their heritage. They pass it on. I have the ability to learn from others, and I want to teach young Africans how to import their knowledge back home and how to make people accept them as Africans."

lessons learned

- When I worked for Richard Melman, founder and chairman of Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises, for one year in Chicago, he taught me to translate my creativity into business and to put a system in place for everything.
- I learned to cook Italian without knowing what it costs.
- In California, I mostly worried about what I was going to cook for Madonna or Julia Roberts.

advice for students

- The most important thing is people. If you're difficult, you're doomed.
- If you don't have heart, you are going to fail. You have to love what you do. Love will keep you persistent.
- Students must find masters to learn from.
- Make sure whatever you do, you pass it on.

THE INTERVIEW françois kwaku-dongo



Krishna Dayanidhi



Krishna Dayanidhi



Krishna Dayanidhi

Top left: François Kwaku-Dongo's curried chicken samosas

Top right: Niçoise tapenade on Tuscan ham croutons

Bottom: François Kwaku-Dongo, fourth from left, with the culinary crew at the James Beard Foundation dinner in New York, March 24, 2009.

tell us about Greenwich, Conn., the site of your restaurant L'Escale.

fw: Greenwich is the Paris of New England. There is a large French community here because it is so close to New York. There are plenty of financial institutions in nearby Stamford, and many Europeans feel comfortable here. But I never thought I would wind up here, or have a career in cooking. The only time I went into the kitchen as a boy was when I was hungry. I remember my mother cooking staples such as peanut butter stew with oxtail, a kind of surf and turf with catfish, cumin, curry and hot peppers. The food must have stayed with me, but as a boy, I was always playing soccer. I was naturally talented. I understood the strategy. I could read the movements of my opponents. I also knew how to partner with other players and set them up to score goals.

When I became a chef, I used the same approach. Knowing my craft as a soccer forward, I had to be a good runner, I had to keep the opponent from getting the ball from me. I had to be good at teamwork. When I became a chef, I had to be a good pasta cook, but also great at frying fish. And if I made a good risotto, it had to be perfect. The love of your work is contagious. When I was making risotto, I would challenge any Italian to make better risotto, and not just to brag, but out of love.

but how did you get from soccer to risotto?

fw: When you up and come to America, there is pressure to become a lawyer, a doctor, a politician, and then go back to your country. Nobody tells you that you have to do hard work. Nobody tells you the reality of the country. I came to America to babysit my nephew for my brother, who was learning to be a pilot.

I started in New York as a delivery boy/busboy at Famous Ray's in 1981. I took it as something I had to overcome. I decided to dive in full force and experience it. As a busboy, I didn't have to know much English, but when I picked up a box for delivery, I had to learn the street, the number, the item in the box, what was in the pizza. Everything was a lesson. When I exchanged money with a customer, I was learning the U.S. system. Everything was a challenge. Nothing prepared me for this job. I came with the purpose not of finding a good job. I said, if I succeed, I want to be like Oprah. I came from nowhere and I wanted to

succeed with what I wanted to do. I wanted to be a translator, and there is no country on earth where so many people from so many countries speak so many languages.

Next, I got a job at Alo Alo as a night cleaner from 11:30 p.m. to 6 a.m., because I was taking classes in literature during the day at Borough of Manhattan Community College. When I got promoted to dishwasher, I heard the staff speaking four or five languages, and I started to learn Portuguese from some of the busboys from Brazil and Italian from the Italian cooks. The chef, Francesco Antonucci, said to me, “François, you can translate your language ability into cooking.”

In Francesco’s kitchen, I saw young chefs, 18-20 years old, who had the same passion that the big chef had, whereas in Africa, unless you’re a soccer player, nobody enjoys a job that much. Nobody but my grandfather, who had a farm, exuded such joy.

Still, when I was a dishwasher at Alo Alo, Francesco didn’t want anyone who wasn’t Italian to touch the food.

so how did you get around that one?

fw: Francesco thought only Italians could understand Italian food. Every Sunday, he took a day off, and the young Italian chefs would say, “François, you can start the tomato sauce because Giovanni or Fabio doesn’t want to do it.” Then they taught me to try to imagine being in their mother’s kitchen in Venice and to try to conjure up the first

“When you up and come to America, there is pressure to become a lawyer, a doctor, a politician, and then go back to your country. Nobody tells you that you have to do hard work. Nobody tells you the reality of the country.”

—François Kwaku-Dongo

impression of stirring or smelling tomato sauce. I had to make the whole thing up in my mind. Then they taught me to make pasta al dente. Had Francesco known that I was on the line on Sundays, he would have been upset.

Then, one of the cooks got ill when a restaurant critic was coming in, and Francesco had to ask people to move around, and I had to cook. After that, he said if I was willing to learn, he was willing to teach me. He started to coach me to make salad, liver with onions and polenta, and risotto. One day, Miles Davis came in and wanted to know who made his risotto. Francesco sent me out, and Miles Davis said, “You don’t look Italian.” Francesco said, “He’s Italian, but Italian from Sicily.” From then on, Francesco trusted me.

Out of this grew my determination that if I knew one dish better than anyone else, it would be my ticket.

And it also showed me that you could teach anybody to do anything.

what is your concept for success at L’Escale?

fw: There is more money here than God created, but people still want value for their money. Here, everything is simple and recognizable, such as tuna with mango, olive oil and sea salt, or duck liver with sour cherries (or poached pears) and sea salt. In wild salmon with grilled asparagus, lemon oil and sea salt, the asparagus is always the same size, the lemon purée is always the same, so is the cost of the dish. You can’t go wrong. Using only three ingredients, it’s easy to train people so customers find consistency. If you know how to cook foie gras perfectly, that’s all you need. ■

Ethel Hammer is a writer, lecturer and cartoonist based in Chicago.

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(2009 ACF Certification Survey)

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(Readex Research Survey)

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