AMERICAN CULINARY FEDERATION
PRESS RELEASE

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Chefs from ACF’s Four Regions Compete for the ACF Pastry Chef of the Year National Title at the 2008 ACF National Convention


The ACF Pastry Chef of the Year award recognizes a pastry chef who displays a passion for the craft, has an accomplished reputation in the pastry field and has helped educate others by sharing skills and knowledge.

This year, chefs from California, Illinois, Kentucky and Ohio and will go head-to-head for the title. Chefs were first nominated by colleagues for their creativity, talent and passion. Chefs must also be well versed in the many disciples of the pastry profession. Chefs in each of the four ACF regions then competed at the regional level. Now, one winner from each region will compete for the national title during the annual trade show, held at MGM’s Grand Garden Arena, July 15-16. There, chefs will prepare selected desserts and pastry work for a panel of distinguished judges who will decide the winner.

ACF Pastry Chef of the Year candidates:
ACF Central Region Pastry Chef of the Year—
R. Andrew Chlebana, II, CEPC, of Plainfield, Ill., is pastry chef at White Eagle Golf Club in Naperville, Ill., and a member of ACF Louis Joliet Chapter. He began his pastry career in 1996 at two of the industry’s finest hotel chains, the Four Seasons Hotel in Chicago and The Ritz-Carlton in Washington, D.C., and Amelia Island, Fla. He was then employed by Albert Uster Imports, Inc., in Gaithersburg, Md., where he was the youngest pastry chef in the company’s history.
ACF Northeast Region Pastry Chef of the Year—
Kathleen Kessler of Cincinnati is pastry chef at Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza in Cincinnati, and a member of ACF Greater Cincinnati Chapter. Kessler graduated at the top of her class from The Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, N.Y., in 1996. Before joining the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza staff, she worked as baking and pastry chef-instructor at New England Culinary Institute, Montpelier, Vt., and held several pastry-chef positions, including at Twin Farms, Barnard, Vt., a Mobil five-star property. She was was Cincinnati Magazine’s Dessert Diva in 2006, and recipient of the Katharine Angell Award from The Culinary Institute of America in 1996.

ACF Southeast Region Pastry Chef of the Year—
Vanessa Haden, CPC, of Louisville, K.Y., is owner/pastry chef at The Wedding Cake in Louisville, Ky., and a member of ACF Kentucky Chapter. The Wedding Cake has been ranked as one of the fastest-growing independent businesses in Kentucky. Her work has been featured in Louisville’s Special Occasion Bridal Magazine 2007 and exhibited at the Speed Art Museum, Louisville. In 2004, she was named ACF Kentucky Chapter’s Pastry Chef of the Year. Haden graduated magna cum laude from Sullivan University, Louisville, with an associate degree in baking and pastry arts.

ACF Western Region Pastry Chef of the Year—
Loïc Laffargue of Santee, Calif., is executive pastry chef at Barona Valley Ranch Resort and Casino in Lakeside, Calif., and a member of ACF Chefs and Culinarians of San Diego. Laffargue’s international career spans more than 20 years. He received his culinary training in France, and worked as a pastry cook at several Michelin-starred restaurants in France and England. Laffargue assisted with the opening of several five-star hotels and restaurants, including the Four Season Resort Aviara, San Diego; Bellagio, Las Vegas; and the Wynn Las Vegas Hotel, Las Vegas.

At the 2008 ACF National Convention, 2,000 chefs, cooks and foodservice professionals will attend this four-day event. There will be more than 100 educational seminars, culinary demos, networking and social functions, culinary competitions, meal events and more. For information, or to attend, visit www.acfchefs.org or call (800) 624-9458.

Sponsors of the 2008 ACF National Convention are: American Lamb Board; Barber Foods; Buckhead Beef Company; Butterball Farms, Inc.; Canada Cutlery Inc.; Cargill Salt; The Cheesecake Factory Bakery, Inc.; Cleveland Range, LLC; Contessa Premium Foods; Custom Culinary, Inc.; Dow AgroSciences; Ecolab; Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers; Fortessa, Inc.; General Mills; GFF, Inc./Girard’s Dressings; Guittard Chocolate Co.; The International Culinary Schools at The Art Institutes; Johnson & Wales University; Lantmannen Unibake USA; Lavazza, Italy’s Favourite Coffee; Le Cordon Bleu Schools North America; Mann’s Fresh Vegetables; McCain Foods USA; Meat & Livestock Australia; Mind’s Eye Resource Management, LLC; Nestlé Professional; NEWCHEF Fashions; Nueske’s Applewood Smoked Meats; Pearson Prentice Hall; Perfect Purée of Napa Valley; RC Fine Foods; RH Forschner by Victorinox Swiss Army, Inc.; R.L. Schreiber, Inc.; Rubbermaid Commercial Products; Saputo; Snake River Farms; Splenda®; Tyson Food Service; Unilever Foodsolutions; U.S. Foodservice; Ventura Foods, LLC; and Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board.

The American Culinary Federation, Inc., established in 1929, is the premier professional organization for culinarians in North America. With more than 21,500 members spanning 230

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chapters nationwide, ACF is the culinary leader in offering educational resources, training, apprenticeship and accreditation. In addition, ACF operates the most comprehensive certification program for chefs in the United States. ACF is home to ACF Culinary Team USA, the official representative for the United States in major international culinary competitions. For more information, visit www.acfchefs.org.

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MEDIA IS INVITED TO ATTEND. CALL PATRICIA CARROLL AT (800) 624-9458 EXTENSION 147 TO REGISTER FOR PRESS CREDENTIALS.

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