Keriann Von Raesfeld Returns From Best Young Commis Rôtisseur International Competition in Paris

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla., September 25, 2008—Keriann Von Raesfeld, of San Jose, Calif., and a member of American Culinary Federation (ACF) Santa Clara Valley Chapter, recently returned from the annual Best Young Commis Rôtisseur International Competition held at Le Cordon Bleu Paris Culinary Institute in Paris, Sept. 19.

Von Raesfeld, a culinary-arts and baking/pastry-arts graduate from Professional Culinary Institute (PCI), Campbell, Calif., won the right to represent the United States at the national Chaîne des Rôtisseurs competition held at Johnson & Wales University in Charlotte, N.C. in May. At the international competition in Paris, she competed against 19 young cooks from around the world.

First place winner was Tobias Gunther of Germany, second place was Michael Dekker of Canada and third place was Daniel Schilcher of Austria. While Von Raesfeld did not place in the competition, she did an outstanding job representing our country and cuisine and was one of only four females in the competition.

“It was an extremely good learning experience for me. It was a very tough competition and I was very honored to be ranked among these outstanding young chefs from all over the world,” said Von Raesfeld.

This isn’t the first international cooking competition that Von Raesfeld has represented the United States in. She won the Hans Bueschkens World Junior Chefs’ Challenge, and was named “best young cook in the world” in Dubai in May.

The competition
The cooks, all younger than 27 years old, were given a “black box,” or secret basket, of ingredients. They had thirty minutes to write their menu: first course, main dish and dessert. With only three and a half hours to cook, they presented four identical plates of the three courses to an international jury of 12. Judges evaluated creativity, punctuality in delivering the dishes, menu, presentation, quality, organization, sanitation, taste and techniques. The winner received a five-week training scholarship to Le Cordon Bleu and the Arthur Bolli Trophy.
Her strategy in Paris

“My strategy for any competition is to stay focused, stay organized, have a game plan and also realize that when you are working in a new environment you need to be able to work with what you are given, and make it work for you,” Von Raesfeld said. “But most importantly, I’m there to cook the best meal of my life. That’s what it’s all about.”

In preparation for the competition, Von Raesfeld trained with her coach, Randy Torres, culinary-arts department chair at Professional Culinary Institute (PCI) in Campbell, Calif. Using “black boxes,” she prepared a menu and followed all the rules she would encounter in Paris. Von Raesfeld also focused on showcasing her pastry work.

“I would have to say my biggest challenge was the language barrier, and also timing,” said Von Raesfeld. “I put up a really good fight and I was proud of myself to have come out in the top among 20 countries and 20 amazing competitors. I feel like it was Germany’s day to take the gold, but don’t worry… I’ll get it next time!”

Von Raesfeld’s Menu

**Appetizer:** Herb-crusted red mullet with roasted garlic eggplant purée, sautéed sweet bell peppers, crispy crouton with olive tapenade and a lemon grass beurre blanc

**Main:** Duo of duck—roasted breast and braised leg—sautéed trumpet mushrooms, glazed pearl onions, fresh green beans, chive roasted potato and natural jus

**Dessert:** Dark chocolate mousse with a raspberry center, butter cookie, orange cream, variety of vanilla-infused fruit, and a salted caramel sauce

USA’s Competitors

Von Raesfeld competed against cooks from: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, Sweden and Turkey.

About the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs

The Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, a worldwide gastronomic association founded in Paris in 1950 finds its origins in 1248 under the reign of Saint-Louis, when the professional corporation des Ayeurs began as a royal guild of geese roasters. The Chaîne des Rôtisseurs encourages the training of young chefs through the Jeunes Commis Rôtisseurs competitions. These events offer young talents the opportunity of demonstrating their skills. There are 25,000 amateurs and professional members spread widely throughout 70 countries. The Chaîne des Rôtisseurs continues to develop and expand.

About the American Culinary Federation

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 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](http://www.acfchefs.org).

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