

A Will to **WIN**

As they enter the international competition arena, members of ACF Culinary Team USA have much going for them, not the least of which is their commitment and experience.

This is the first in a series of articles on ACF Culinary Team USA that will appear every other month in The National Culinary Review. The articles will track the team as it practices and competes on its way to the 2008 International Culinary Exhibition (IKA) in Erfurt, Germany.



BY KAY ORDE

This month, the ACF Culinary Team USA national team competes in the Culinary World Cup, which is held every four years during the Expogast trade show in Luxembourg. The team takes with it a wealth of experience in the international-competition arena; five of the six team members were part of the Team USA that earned World Champion status in hot-food cookery in October 2004 at the International culinary Exhibition (IKA), more commonly known as the '[culinary] Olympics,' in Erfurt, Germany.

Commitment plus

The team will keep the "World Champion" title until the 2008 IKA. Returning team members, with a solid four years under their belts crowned by a prestigious title, could have elected to pass the baton to a new team. The reason they signed on for another four years is testament to their commitment—and a desire to take care of some unfinished business.

"Team USA has some unfinished business in Germany," says team captain Richard Rosendale, CC, executive chef/owner of Rosendale's at the Winders, Columbus, Ohio, and a member of ACF National Chapter. "It was a true honor to be named world hot-food champions, but we would like to win the entire '[culinary] Olympics.' It's really that simple."

Fellow team member Daniel Scannell, CMC, executive chef at Carnegie Abbey Club, Portsmouth, R.I., and a member of ACF Colorado Chefs Association, agrees. Scannell, who was a member of both the 2000 and 2004 teams, knows all about the commitment it takes. "My commitment to ACF Culinary Team USA for the past eight years has been nothing less than my life," he says. "I am constantly practicing techniques and ideas, trying to come up with something new that not only makes sense but will show well in the competition arena."

Joachim Buchner, CMC, executive chef at Chevy Chase Club, Chevy Chase, Md., and a member of ACF Nation's Capital Chefs Association, had similar reasons to commit to another four years on the team. "The state of constantly challenging my creativity just became a part of me," he says. "Over the past several years, my cooking style has improved and changed. The new vision that I gained from the team I brought to the club and shared with my fellow chefs. And I consider time spent with the team as time spent doing what makes me happy, because I cook with friends. It's all about the food. We cook, we taste and we make it better. We learn and we share. We all grow together."

The serious nature of committing for a further four years was something Patricia Nash, executive pastry chef at Westchester Country Club, Rye, N.Y., and a member of ACF Chefs Association of Westchester and Lower



Buchner



Keating



Leonard



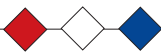
Nash



Rosendale



Scannell



Team Training

The ACF Culinary Team USA national team was named following tryouts at the National Restaurant Association Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show® in Chicago in May. Also named at that time were members of two regional teams, considered the “farm teams” for future national teams. Five regional team members (in bold, below) will assist the national team in Luxembourg.

Team USA regional team members are:

Christopher Desens, CEC, executive chef, the Racquet Club Ladue, St. Louis, member of ACF Chefs de Cuisine Association of St. Louis, Inc.

Scott Fetty, chef-instructor,

Pennsylvania Culinary Institute, Pittsburgh, member of ACF Pittsburgh Chapter

Drew Garms, rounds cook, The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs, W.Va., member of ACF National Chapter

Jennifer Kopp, CPC, pastry chef, Chevy Chase Club, Chevy Chase, Md., member of Nation’s Capital Chefs Association

Joseph Leonardi, department chair/assistant professor, Johnson & Wales University, Providence, R.I., member of ACF Rhode Island Chapter

Michael Matarazzo, rounds chef, The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs,

W.Va., member of ACF National Chapter

Craig Peterson, executive chef, Hallbrook Country Club, Leawood, Kan., member of ACF Greater Kansas City Chefs Association

Timothy Prefontaine, CSC, executive sous chef, River Oaks Country Club, Houston, member ACF Chapter of Northern New Hampshire

Mellisa Root, pastry chef, River Oaks Country Club, Houston, member of Texas Chefs Association

Daryl Shular, CCC, chef-instructor, The Art Institute of Atlanta, Roswell, Ga., member of ACF Greater Atlanta Chapter, Inc.

Connecticut, didn’t take lightly. “I decided fairly last-minute to do the team again, in part because of the huge commitment,” she says. “But once I spoke with some of the returning members, and Chef Ed, I was in. Everyone, ultimately, has the same goal. In the end, we all want to win.”

“Chef Ed” is Edward Leonard, CMC, AAC, executive chef at Westchester Country Club, and a member of ICA-ACF Big Apple Chapter. Leonard is Team USA manager, a position he held since 1998, in addition to being the team’s captain. He will be a competing team member for the Culinary World Cup and subsequent international competitions, under a recent rules change that allows team managers to be part of the kitchen team.


Strength in (small) numbers

Jamie Keating, CCC, chef/owner of Gourmet Events and RiverMill Event Centre, Columbus, Ga., and a member of ACF Greater Atlanta Chapter, Inc., might be the new man on the team, but he’s far from inexperienced. In 2005, he was a member of the national team that competed in Basel, Switzerland, where he focused on cold food, an area that he considers to be his strength. “After the competition in Basel, I knew I wanted to be a part of this great team and commit myself to winning a world championship,” he says.



For the Culinary World Cup, Keating is responsible for 12 cold items, as well as playing a role in hot food. He says he looks forward to the challenges. “I am constantly challenging myself to create new concepts, rather than settling for old philosophies or items that I’ve previously entered in competition and feel comfortable with,” he says.

As the lone pastry chef on the team, Nash knows all about the need to come up with cutting-edge ideas. The trick, she says, is to know your competencies, focus on those techniques and “do what I do every day and what I’ve been trained to do.” And, she admits, “I

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THE AMERICAN CULINARY FEDERATION AND THE SUPPORTERS OF ACF CULINARY TEAM USA WISH THE TEAM THE BEST OF LUCK IN THE UPCOMING CULINARY WORLD CUP COMPETITION, HELD EVERY FOUR YEARS IN LUXEMBOURG. THE CULINARY WORLD CUP IS A FIVE-DAY COMPETITION THAT TAKES PLACE DURING EXPOGAST, AN INTERNATIONAL GASTRONOMY SHOW, HELD Nov. 18-22, 2006.

RICHARD ROSENDALE, CC
ACF Culinary Team USA
gold medalist
and 2005 ACF Chef of the Year

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love it when people like my work and ask how I did certain things. That's satisfaction." But she says the learning experience is a huge benefit of international team competition. "I want to be good at what I do, and feel that it's my obligation to help the team show that we really are one of the top contenders."

Buchner will work on a three-course menu in cold food, as well as the team's five-course hot-food menu. "Each chef on the team has a different cooking style and, of course, a different way his or her food is presented," he says. "Our first challenge is to make our cold program look as though it was designed with a single vision. That's not to say that I will cook like one chef or another, but, rather, that we all need to cook like Culinary Team USA."

Scannell will present two hot-food items displayed cold—a restaurant vegetarian platter for four and a restaurant platter for two—in Luxembourg. Past competition experience will serve him well, as will the knowledge that the only true challenges in such situations are those that competitors give themselves. "Maintaining a positive, focused attitude during the Culinary World Cup will be the key," he says.

Experience has no price

Rosendale agrees that staying focused is vital, and in his primary area, hot food, that's what he intends to do. "Now that we are hot-food champions, everyone will measure their success against us, so we have to show up with a great menu," he says. "We have to raise the bar every time."

His take on hot food sounds deceptively simple, however: "It takes a great dish, with great flavors, perfectly executed." To

accomplish that, Rosendale will rely on his creative imagination and a disciplined approach to his dishes that, he says, is well-grounded in classical cooking, but not entirely controlled by it. The real plus, however, is experience.

"After going through the '[culinary] Olympics' once, I now have the experience under my belt that I didn't have the first time," he says. "You can't put a price on experience. It's so valuable." But, he adds, the pressure of international competition is enormous. "Imagine—three years of practice comes down to a hundred little things that could go wrong, for example, scorching a sauce or overcooking the meat. Any mistakes can have severe consequences and cost you a medal. It's hard to deal with that the first time, with so much riding on our performance. Now, after being there, and knowing what's expected, I feel better prepared."

Buchner says knowing fellow team members well and what each chef is capable of certainly helps in team competition. "But it will not give us a better chance in the actual competition," he says. "For success, we need to practice our program and work on eliminating obstacles, which is what every other team is working on, as well."

Nash agrees. "The core is there," she says. "We did well in Germany in 2004, but I look at it as a practice run for 2008."

Success in 2008 would please Scannell. When asked what it was about being on the team that gave him satisfaction, he had just one word: "Winning." □

In January's NCR, Edward Leonard, CMC, AAC, ACF Culinary Team USA manager, will talk about past, present and future teams.

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