

# ACF CULINARY TEAM USA

## Team Practice

By Michelle Whitfield

ACF Culinary National Team USA 2012 had its first practice session June 7-9 at Johnson & Wales University (JWU) in Charlotte, N.C. The assignment was cold food exhibition, and each team member had two or three dishes and/or platters to prepare, based on the requirements and guidelines for the Culinary World Cup. The national team will compete at the Culinary World Cup in Luxembourg in November.

Team members arrived early Monday morning at Charlotte Douglas International Airport with boxes of equipment and supplies. Geoffrey Blount, CEPC, executive pastry chef at Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, and Kimberly Stoll, a student at the school, helped transfer team members to JWU. There, Mark Allison, dean of culinary education, and Ashley McGee, CEC, educator, were on hand to ensure that all went smoothly.

Team manager Steve Jilleba, CMC, CCE, AAC, thanked the new national team members for their passion and dedication to the team. "Welcome to the beginning of an unforgettable journey," he said.

Also at the practice session were team advisor Keith Keogh, CEC, AAC, and coaches Joachim Buchner, CMC, Patricia



Nash and Gilles Renusson. George Gonzalez, a finalist in the national team tryouts, travelled at his own expense to the practice session to assist and to learn from team members.

The team quickly got to work preparing the dishes and platters that would be displayed and critiqued the following day. The kitchen was bustling, and team members worked with intensity and precision, staying focused on the job at hand.

That evening, Keogh gave a presentation of his experiences on ACF Culinary Team USA in 1992 and 1996. His advice for this new generation of team members was to rediscover old techniques and use ingredients from the same regional area. "And I can't stress too much the importance of teamwork," he said. "Also, remember that you represent each and every chef in the U.S. in competition."

The following morning, team members were back in the kitchen to finish their dishes. Then,



Joseph Leonardi, left, and Ben Grupe work on cold food during the national team's first practice session.

each chef presented one of his assignments, followed by comments from Buchner, Jilleba and Keogh. Team members listened intently to the information given and advice offered. When it was time to present their second dish or platter, they were critiquing their own work. The second day concluded with practice in hot food—an appetizer and a main dish.

Early Wednesday morning, the team met to review what they had learned over the past two days and to discuss the path forward. The next practice session is scheduled for July 19-21 at JWU in Providence, R.I.



George Gonzales, left, watches Ben Grupe and Eddie Tancredi at work.



**Timothy Bucci, CEC, CCE, CHE**  
**R. Andrew "Andy" Chlebana II, CEPC, CCA**  
**Anthony "Ben" Grupe**  
**Joseph Leonardi, CEC**  
**Timothy Prefontaine, CEC**  
**J. Kevin Storm, CEC, CCA, AAC**  
**Eddie Tancredi**