

Driven to Succeed

The drive that has marked Richard Rosendale's career is alive and well as Team USA heads to the IKA.

By Kay Orde

Richard Rosendale, CC, is a prime example of the best of the upcoming generation of young culinarians: disciplined, committed and determined to do whatever it takes to meet his goals. In 2002, at the age of 25, he tried out for and earned a place on ACF Culinary Team USA, which, in 2004, won back World Champion status in hot cookery for the United States and placed third overall in the world. In 2005, Rosendale was named U.S.A.'s Chef of the Year™. And in 2007, he opened Rosendales, his restaurant in Columbus, Ohio. (www.rosendales.com)

"I think, in the beginning, all young culinarians aspire to be great and to make a name for themselves," Rosendale says. "I was no different. I wanted to achieve as much as I could, and that created unbelievable drive. It's a drive that has never left me."

Rosendale fed that drive by earning a place on ACF Culinary Team USA. He

was named the national team's captain in 2007, and will lead ACF Culinary National Team USA as it competes in Erfurt, Germany, at the 2008 International Culinary Art Exhibition (IKA) in October. He says the team provides the challenge he was looking for, and in exchange, expects from him a huge commitment and tremendous sacrifice.

But it has also rewarded him. In addition to the pleasure he gets from working with his teammates, he says competing keeps him sharp. "As a restaurant owner, I need to know that I can step into any situation under extreme conditions and operate with poise and composure."

Meet Richard Rosendale, CC

Rosendale's heritage is Italian and German, and he says his grandparents impacted his love for food and helped nurture him along the path of cooking at an early age. That path led him to an ACF apprenticeship program in 1997 at Westmoreland Community College in Youngwood, Pa., where he graduated first in his class. After a second apprenticeship at The Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va., he took the position of



chef de cuisine at the resort's award-winning Tavern Room. Along the way, he became a certified professional ice carver.

He married Laura, his high school sweetheart, in July 2004. "We had been dating since 7th grade, and she has made huge sacrifices over the years," Rosendale says. "She has been a big source of support for me in my life and all my endeavors. I have a pretty hectic schedule, and I couldn't do it without her."

The Rosendales are expecting their first child in May, and Rosendale says he's eager to experience fatherhood. He has fond memories of growing up in Uniontown, Pa., with mom Sharon and younger sister Kristen, who are among his biggest supporters.

"My family has given up so much for me over the years. I have missed so many significant family events and special occasions in order to make it to team dinners

Rosendale combines ahi tuna and togarshi pork rind with sesame aioli in this amuse bouche.

and other team functions," Rosendale says. "It is harder to stay on the team than it is to get on it, I believe. I think people underestimate the level of commitment it takes from the team members, but equally, the families of the team members."

Rosendale is resigned to the fact that, with a busy restaurant to run and the IKA a little more than six months away, there is no free time in his schedule. "But that is all I know, and honestly, I am very happy," he says. "I enjoy living life and getting as much out of it as possible. Every minute of my life is occupied with family, work and team."

He usually takes Sundays off, and works long days the rest of the week. But he's found a way to stay on top of a daunting schedule. "I would say the biggest

Downtime

Although he doesn't have time to pursue a hobby, Rosendale is interested in life outside the kitchen. "If I had to pick one thing, it would be that I love to learn—about history, the sciences, politics. Life and culture are fascinating to me. Maybe that is why I always enjoy traveling and cooking. You can learn a lot about a culture by simply knowing how they eat."

Precious time away from work duties and team commitments is spent with

his wife. "I really enjoy the time with Laura, and that is relaxing to me, just spending the day with her and not having to worry about all my responsibilities," Rosendale says.

"And I am really looking forward to being a father and putting the same kind of dedication that I put into my restaurant and the team into raising my son."



characteristic I have is extreme discipline and commitment," Rosendale says. "When I commit to doing something, I am very aggressive about seeing it through to the end."

Team time

He says he was honored to be appointed national team captain, and it's a responsibility he takes seriously. But as a chef and restaurant owner, finding time to practice on his own is a challenge. "So, the key now is efficiency," he says. "When I practice, there needs to be a purpose attached to it and an idea that is well thought out. There needs to be an agenda for each session, because I can't afford to waste time."

On the team, Rosendale's cold-program responsibility is the buffet platter. In the hot kitchen, he's the organizer. "I do a lot of the co-coordinating of logistics, but honestly, we have been working together for so long that we don't require a lot of coordinating. During the hot-food part of the competition, I usually work the stove, which can get confusing if you're not really paying attention."



A peppercorn-crusted strip steak partners with parsnip silk, potato crisp and chocolate salt.

Rosendale knows all about paying attention, and he understands the need to be adaptable when involved in the kind of fierce competition that the team will encounter in Erfurt. He says being on the team has made him able to deal with just about anything that may come his way. "I have had so much thrown at me over the years that there's not a lot that rattles me and causes me to lose my cool," he says. "I never underestimate how good the competition is, but I am confident in my own skills."

Those skills translate to his restaurant's kitchen. "While our food in the restaurant is a little different than what we do in the international arena, there is a common thread in the pursuit of perfection, quality, execution and creativity," he says.

Rosendale says that being a member of the team has given him a more tangible reward, however. "The camaraderie and new relationships has been the best thing

about being on the team. The people I have met during the journey have been a real pleasure to know."

And then there's the boost that competing as part of the team has given to his personal growth. "I think of my skills as an investment, and I am 10 times the cook I was before I got on the team," Rosendale says. "It also taught me how to persevere. It takes a lot to stay disciplined all the time when there is so much going on in your life, but sometimes, you need to shift gears and focus on whatever the priority is at that time. The team has helped me do that."

Raising the bar

Rosendale is well aware that being on the team requires that members raise the bar if they are going to succeed in the international arena. But it's something that has become almost second nature to him. "I do it every day in my restaurant. You have to raise the bar over and over again," he says. "That's what makes me tick, and that's what I enjoy. I don't want to be involved in a job that allows me to become complacent. The thought of what a new day holds for me is what gets me in to work every day.

"You have to want it, and you have to be very ambitious. I feed off the new concepts and big ideas. I always imagine, what if I just reach a little further, or try a little harder? There is always the possibility that I can create something that has never been done before, and that is exciting."

He's aware that many chefs don't understand the commitment it takes to be on the

team, but he says there's a reason for that. "They are puzzled as to why you would do something without a paycheck that requires so much effort," he says. "But whether chefs appreciate it or not, we represent them. And while many may criticize what we do, at the end of the day, this competition has inspired the countries of the world to participate, and I am proud to step up to the plate to represent this one."

Rosendale says he wouldn't trade his time on the team. "As much work and as much sacrifice, and hours upon hours of sleepless nights I have endured, being part of this organization has given me so much more than I could have ever asked for," he says.

"If I could go back to 2002 before the tryouts, I would do it all over again. It's been a great ride—and we still have one more stop."

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