

# Chefs participate in qualifier of first Chef of Year competition

LOS ANGELES — The qualifying round for the American Culinary Federation's first Chef of the Year competition recently was staged as part of the Western Foodservice & Hospitality Expo Culinary Salon at the Convention Center here.

Hosted last month by the ACF's Los Angeles chapter in conjunction with its sister organization, the Chefs de Cuisine Association of California, the hour-long competition featured seven chefs, who were nominated by peers. The event was a demonstration of the contestants' "practical and contemporary hot-food cooking."

The winner of the event, who will not be announced until the CCAC-ACFLA President's Ball in October, will be eligible to compete next February in a cook-off at the ACF's Western region conference in Colorado Springs, Colo. The winner of the Colorado cooking contest will be one of four ACF regional representatives to compete in the national ACF Chef of the Year mystery basket competition during the federation's national conference next July in Orlando, Fla.

ACF leaders recently decided that the recipient of the group's annual, national Chef of the Year Award should be determined through a multitier cooking competition. In the past ACF members voted to select the Chef of the Year from among regional nominees. The Los Angeles Chef of the Year Culinary Competition was the first chapter qualifier held under the new format.

Also part of the Western Foodservice & Hospitality Culinary Salon were exhibitions of cold and hot foods, patisserie items and showpiece creations. In the daily "chef's table luncheon" demonstrations, a four-person team was judged on the planning and preparation of a

75-portion, three-course meal. Winning the chef's table event was Team Desert Springs led by Steve Ferraro, executive sous chef, JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa, Palm Desert, Calif.

The participants in the Los Angeles Chef of the Year cooking competition included Robert Baradaran, chef instructor, El Camino College, Torrance, Calif.; Rudy Garcia, executive chef instructor, Los Angeles Mission College, Sylmar, Calif.; Jeff Marino, executive chef, Palomino, Los Angeles; Mial Parker, chef instructor, Art Institute of California-Los Angeles, Santa Monica, Calif.; Stefano Samson, executive chef, Valentino Restaurant, Santa Monica; Dennis Sheeler, executive chef, Eurest Dining Services, ABC Studios, Burbank, Calif.; and Romeo Warin, executive chef, Provence Cafe, also in Santa Monica.

Judging the event were the ACF's Joseph Amendola, ambassador, The Culinary Institute of America; Roland G. Henin, chef and consultant, Yosemite, Calif.; John S. Hui, executive pastry chef, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas; and Roland E. Schaeffer, chef and consultant, St. Augustine, Fla. Giovanni Joe Delrosario, the ACF's competition manager and a developer of culinary curriculum for Los Angeles area community college districts, and Whitney Werner, executive chef of The Beach Club in Santa Monica, organized the competition.

On hand to observe the Los Angeles competition and culinary salon were a number of past and present ACF national officers and award winners, including Bert Cutino, executive chef and co-owner, Sardine Factory Restaurant, Monterey, Calif.

—Alan J. Liddle



PHOTOS: ALAN J. LIDDLE

Above: Dinner's On. Dennis Sheeler, executive chef for Eurest Dining Services at ABC Studios and ACF Los Angeles chapter president, plates up his entry as the competition clock ticks down.



Left: Handle With Care. Romeo Warin, Provence Cafe executive chef, assembles his entry during the Los Angeles Chef of the Year Culinary Competition.

Below: The Right Bite? Chef of the Year Culinary Competition judge John S. Hui, foreground, tastes the fruits of the labors of competing chef Dennis Sheeler of ABC Studios as fellow judge Roland G. Henin awaits his turn.



Left: VIPs If You Please. Los Angeles region Chef of the Year Culinary Competition organizers, judges and observers, front row, from left: Whitney Werner, The Beach Club; Joseph Amendola, The Culinary Institute of America; Roland E. Schaeffer, chef-consultant; and Giovanni Joe Delrosario, Los Angeles Trade-Technical College. Back row: Roland G. Henin, chef-consultant; Bert Cutino, Sardine Factory Restaurant; and John S. Hui, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas.

