

Meet the Judges

ACF Culinary Challenge



Celebrating 20 Years
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 CONFERENCE & TRADESHOW



Darrin Aoyama CEPO
Executive Pastry Chef
River Oaks Country Club,
Houston, TX

Chef Aoyama has distinguished himself in culinary competitions both nationally and internationally by winning over 40 awards. In 2000, he represented the United States of America as the National Pastry Chef on the American Culinary Federation's Culinary Team 2000 and brought home 4 gold medals and 1 silver medal. In addition, Chef Aoyama has captured Gold and Silver Medals from the 1998 and 2002 World Cup in Luxembourg and the 1999 Culinary Classic in Chicago, Illinois.

Chef Aoyama captured 2nd overall and 1 gold and 1 silver medal at the 2004 Culinary Olympics in Erfurt, Germany as a member of the American Culinary Federation's USA National Pastry Team 2004. Since 2005, Chef Aoyama has been an Advisor and Coach for the Pastry Chefs of the American Culinary Federation's USA Culinary Olympic Team. Most recently, he served as the Lead Coach for the pastry chefs of the American Culinary Federation's USA Culinary Olympic Team that brought home Gold Medals across the board in pastry at the 2008 Culinary Olympics in Erfurt, Germany. He is again a coach for the 2012 American Culinary Federation's USA Culinary Olympic Team



Ken Arnone CMC, WGMC
KA-CMC LLC

Chef Ken Arnone is one of 65 Certified Master Chefs in the United States and one of less than 300 Global Master Chefs in the world. His culinary expertise was honed at Cuisine Actuelle, The Salish Lodge, New York Marriott Marquis and the Culinary Institute of America.

Chef Arnone is currently bringing his passion for food to corporations and individuals via consulting and catering. His vast knowledge base, attention to detail and creative style have attracted many prominent clients including: Colavita USA and International, Darden Restaurant Group, GRS Restaurant Group, Granite City Food and Brewery, Marriott International, Renaissance Hotels and US Foods. Chef Arnone has skillfully executed Food and Wine events around the globe for the past 15 years.

He is currently co-authoring a food and wine-pairing book and recently released a spicy spread and dip to the market called Pesto Diavolo.



Joachim Buchner, CMC

German born and trained, Buchner began his culinary career as an apprentice to Master Chef Fritz Ring in his native Nuremberg. Upon completion of his apprenticeship, he worked at the Düsseldorf Hilton, and the ski resort town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen. To broaden his horizons and in a quest for adventure, Buchner came to the U.S. in 1983. Through working in small specialty restaurants, and large established hotels, he learned the ins and outs of the foodservice industry. His experience led him to open restaurants for several new hotels.

In 1987 he returned to Germany to complete coursework and testing for his German Master Chef certification. Three years later he earned his Master Chef Certification from the American Culinary Federation, joining the ranks of fewer than 50 Master Chefs in the American Culinary Federation.

Throughout his career he has actively competed in culinary competitions winning numerous medals, awards, and prizes. He then expanded his participation in culinary

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competitions by entering the realm of judging. He became qualified as an Official ACF Competition Judge in 1995, and Official World Association of Cooks Society approved international competition Judge in 2009. In 1999, he was named as an adviser to the US National Culinary Olympic Team 2000, which represented the United States of America in October 2000 in Germany.

Chef Buchner continued his culinary competition activities, resulting in his earning a position on the US National Culinary Olympic Team 2004, and 2008 which represented the United States in six international competitions, winning a total of 13 gold medals and 3 world championships. In 2009 he was appointed to guide and coach the 2012 US National Culinary Olympic Team in preparation for upcoming competitions.

The state of Maryland recognized Chef Joachim Buchner, for his team's gold medal win in the International Culinary Exhibition in Germany. On May 5 2005, Senator Sharon Grosfeld presented Chef Buchner with an official citation for his participation with the team.



Giovanni Delrosario M Ed., CEC

Giovanni Delrosario graduated from the University of Nevada Las Vegas with both a BS and a M Ed. degrees. He is also one of the first apprentice graduate of the American Culinary Federation Educational Institute Culinary Apprenticeship in the state of Nevada. He graduated from Truckee Meadows Community College with an AAS in Restaurant and Culinary Technology. He is currently the Director/ Associate Professor/Executive Chef for the Culinary Program at Los Angeles Harbor College and a Program Developer for the Los Angeles Community College District.

Giovanni was a Professor and Director of the Culinary Arts Program at the Community College of Southern Nevada and has taught at Los Angeles Trade Technical College, the California State University at Long Beach, the University of Nevada Las Vegas, and Truckee Meadows Community College. He is the president of Culinary Pro Hospitality Group, a Food & Beverage Consulting company since 1998 and the current Executive Director for non-profit FoodBiz Without Borders.

Giovanni has over 21 years of experience as chef and Executive Chef for the University of Nevada Reno, Harrah's Hotel & Casino, the Las Vegas and Reno Hilton Hotels, and the Sahara Hotels and Casino. He has also lived and consulted in Moscow, Russia, Sofia in Bulgaria, Bucharest in Romania, Montreux in Switzerland, Venice in Italy, Buenos Aires in Argentina, Istanbul in Turkey, and Manila in the Philippines.

He has been awarded Vocational Teacher of the Year in 2004 and Educator of the Year in 2001 at Los Angeles Trade Technical College, the Educator of the Year by the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce in 1997, the Burlington Outstanding Teaching Faculty at the Community College of Southern Nevada in 1993, the National Institute of Staff and Organizational Development at the University of Texas, Austin in 1994



SFC Rene J. Marquis Certified Executive Chef, Certified Culinary Educator, Personal Certified Executive Chef, Certified Culinary Administrator, American Academy of Chefs

He was voted Chef of the Year in Las Vegas in 1994, has rSFC Rene J. Marquis was born in Lewiston, Maine. He graduated with an AS from the Culinary Institute of America (CIA), Hyde Park, NY in March 1992. While attending the CIA, SFC Marquis did his externship at the Worthington Hotel in Fort Worth, Texas.

Upon graduation, Chef Marquis worked as a Garde Manger and a Chef Tournant at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs, CO. He then accepted a position as the Executive Sous Chef for the Holiday Inn Executive Center in Columbia, MO, where he worked until joining the Army in 1994. His first assignment after basic training was as a personal chef and Enlisted Aide for Lieutenant General Wakefield, the commander of the United States Army Combined Arms Support Command at Fort Lee, VA. SFC Marquis also held an Enlisted Aide position with General Peay, the United States Army Central Commander at MacDill Airforce Base in Tampa, FL.

Upon his request SFC Marquis was then assigned to the Premier 18th Airborne, Ala Carte Troop Feeding Dining Facility in the Army located at Fort Drum, NY. He served

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as a Shift Leader at the state of the art facility and deployed four times while there from 1997 - 2000.

Chef Rene Marquis was a Senior Chef Instructor at the Quartermaster Center and School with the Army Center of Excellence, Subsistence at Fort Lee, VA from 2000-2003. He taught the flagship culinary course for all of the military services: the Advanced Culinary Skills Training Course, whose course focus was in mastering the fundamentals of cookery and pastry preparation. Chef Marquis won and held the title of Virginia's Iron Chef for 2 consecutive years.

Chef Rene Marquis was then assigned as the Enlisted Aide to the Deputy Commander of USPAC OM, LTG Robert R. Dierker from 2003-2004. During this time, Chef Marquis was one of six competing members of The United States Army Culinary Arts Team, (USACAT) for the Culinary Olympics, which were held in Erfurt Germany from 17-21st of October, 2004. USACAT won 16 Gold and 17 Silver medals, the highest medal count for anyone team from anyone country. Chef Marquis was then assigned as the Enlisted Aide to LTG Robert T. Dail, Deputy Commander of USTRANS COM from 2005-2006. LTG Dail was selected and appointed as the Director of Defense Logistics Agency. SFC Marquis was asked to accompany LTG Dail at Ft Belvoir, VA where he served as his Enlisted Aide. At this time Chef Marquis was selected as Team Captain of USACAT and served in that capacity for the Culinary World Cup 2006 in Luxembourg.



Dale "SHAG" Shigenag, Kitchen Manager/Sous Chef, UNLV

Dale "Shag" Shigenaga began his culinary arts profession 40 years ago while in the United States Air Force working in numerous back of the house positions in the USAF Enlisted and Officer Clubs. He is currently the Kitchen Manager/Sous

Chef at the University of Nevada Las Vegas and on the Board of Directors of the ACF Chefs of Las Vegas.

Since arriving in Las Vegas, he has been involved in coordinating and managing local, regional, and national ACF competitions. Currently, he is the show chair for the Culinary Challenge hot and cold food competition to be held

during the Catersource Show in Las Vegas. At the National Restaurant Association show in Chicago, he was a committee member for the ACF hot food competitions, ACF National Team trials, Bocus d'Or, and the American Classic as Apprentice, Protocol Manager, Kitchen Manager, Assistant Show Chair, and Show Chair respectively. He has assisted with the WAC cold salon and helped with the display set up for the ACF National Team in Erfurt, Germany. Due to his involvement, Shag has received numerous certificates of appreciation from past ACF presidents. In addition, he has been involved with the local high school Skills USA VICA and Pro Start culinary programs as show chair, mentor, and kitchen judge during their state competitions.

He was a junior member of the College of Southern Nevada junior hot food and knowledge bowl teams which represented Nevada at numerous ACF National Conferences. The experience gained was used to great advantage, as he was appointed coach for both teams after leaving the junior chef program. He was awarded Junior Chef of the Year from the Fraternity of Executive Chefs of Las Vegas. He currently is the only person to win both Junior Chef of the Year and Professional Chef of the Year from the Las Vegas chapter.

Shag has been recognized by the ACF through numerous medals, diplomas, and certificates, competing locally and nationally, both as a junior member and professional. He was certified by the ACF as a Certified Sous Chef and awarded the Presidential Medallion. He is a graduate of both the College of Southern Nevada and University of Nevada Las Vegas. He was the ACF Chefs Las Vegas 2006 Chef of the Year. In 2007, he was recognized by the Nevada Hospitality Foundation as Mentor of the Year for his dedication and service in training Food Safety and Sanitation for the ProStart Program.



Chef Derek Spendlove CEPC, CCE, AAC, HOGT Chairperson Baking & Pastry Arts Program Sullivan University

Chef Derek Spendlove, as a professional chef, food writer, educator and mentor, has shared his expertise with many aspiring and seasoned chefs for over 30 years. Born and

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raised in Ireland, Chef Spendlove trained in the traditional European techniques and earned his City & Guild examination in Culinary Arts and Hotel Management. He is an ACF Certified Executive Pastry Chef (CEPC) and Certified Culinary Educator (CCE). He is also a member of the Honorable Order of the Golden Toque (HOGT) and the Academy of Chefs.

He currently serves as Chairman of the Baking and Pastry Arts Program for the National Center for Hospitality Studies at Sullivan University. Additionally, he is Team Manager of Sullivan University's award-winning student Culinary Competition team and has been certified by the ACF as a national culinary judge.

Over the years, Chef Spendlove has had food articles published in several national publications. He has been an avid competitor in culinary competitions, successfully competing in numerous events held in Holland, the United Kingdom, Germany and Ireland. In 1988 Chef Spendlove received a gold medal representing Ireland on their national team in the Culinary Olympics held in Frankfurt, Germany. In 2002 the American Culinary Federation awarded him Educator of the Year.

Additionally, in 2003 he received the National Chef Professionalism Award from the ACF. Chef Spendlove has recently been instrumental in the redesign of the Certified Master Pastry Chef (CMPC) practical exam. In 2008 the ACF Certification Commission honored him with an appointment as Chair-Elect. He now serves as chair of this committee. The Commission oversees the certification requirements and practical examinations for over 22,000 ACF members.



Randy Torres, CEC

Chef Randy Torres is currently a chef instructor at the Oregon Coast Culinary Institute. He received his formal training from Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, CA, where he earned an Advanced Culinary Certificate in 1999. He

has worked in private clubs and hotels around the country, and has won numerous medals in competitions, including gold medals at the Las Vegas Culinary Challenge in 1996 and 2008. He competed nationally and internationally as a member of the California Culinary Team from 1996 to 2004.

In 2008 he again competed as a member of Team USA and won gold in the 2008 IKA in Erfurt, Germany. Most recently, he coached the Youth Team USA to 3 gold medals and first place finish at the Scot-Hot Culinary Grand Prix in Glasgow, Scotland. He has also had great success managing the student hot food team while at Orange Coast Community College and at the Professional Culinary Institute.

Currently he is again coaching the Youth Team USA that will be competing in the 2012 IKA in Erfurt, Germany. Most recently coached Reilly Meehan to victory in Chaines Des Rotisseurs Jenunes Comms competition in Istanbul Turkey.

13th Annual Las Vegas Culinary Challenge Categories

Traditional Categories

- Cooking (specify 1-6)
- Cooking (specify 1-4)
- Patisserie/Confectionery (specify 1-4)
- Showpieces

Contemporary Categories

- Rock Cornish Game Hen, Chicken or Duck
- Bone-In Pork Loin
- Bone-In Lamb Loin or Rack
- Fish
- Turkey with Vanilla Competition
- PreGel Hot/Warm or Cold Dessert

Fruit/Vegetable Carving Competitions

- Theme: Star Wars

Multi-Tiered Cake Competition

- Theme: Mardi Gras

Decorative Centerpiece

Sugar Centerpiece

- Theme: Dance