

The National Conference Center Culinary Team Wins Accolades from IACC



Published by Ozgur Tore

Thursday, 07 April 2011 17:02

The National Conference Center recently hosted the 30th annual conference of the International Association of Conference Centers in Leesburg, VA.

The international crowd of 300, attended general sessions, workshops, seminars, panel discussions, and forums. They also experienced innovative, delicious and international themed meals, breaks and receptions from the Culinary Team at the 917- room conference center that sits on 110 acres in northern Virginia.

The opening night Welcome Reception featured gourmet offerings from the staff of The National Conference Center and featured ARAMARK chefs from across the region. Seven ARAMARK chefs came together to create and present IACC Road Trip: A Taste of ARAMARK which showcased regional culinary offerings from regions across the US including, Chesapeake Bay, Bayou, Deep South, West Coast, Pacific Northwest, Southwest, and New England. In addition to Chef Craig Mason, Executive Chef at The National Conference Center, ARAMARK Chefs came from AOL Corporate Headquarters (Ashburn, VA), ARAMARK Corporate Headquarters, (Philadelphia, PA), Janelia Farm Research Campus (Lansdowne, VA), Chauncey Conference Center (Princeton, NJ), Atria West Mark One (Richmond, VA), and Ace Insurance (Philadelphia, PA).

Regional dishes included Miniature Maryland Crabcakes with Pickled Red Cabbage Slaw (Chef Mason, The National Conference Center) and Muffaletta Sliders featuring Capicola, Pistachio Mortadella and Salami, Piled High with Provolone Smothered in Olive Relish Served on Focaccia (Chef David Williams, Atria West Mark One).

According to Chef Mason, “the Culinary Team at NCC reached out to regional chefs and they all responded very enthusiastically. There was great potential for personalities, schedules and even menus to clash. But we worked really well together and had a great time putting together a really fun, memorable – and tasty dinner reception.”

The following day, Chef Mason and his team followed very specific recipes provided by the seven IACC conference center chefs who assembled in the National Ballroom for the eighth annual Copper Skillet competition to name the Conference Center Chef of the Year award. IACC Chefs from Sweden, Denmark, The Netherlands, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States were given a mystery market basket of fresh produce, grains and protein ingredients to use in the preparation. Each chef was given 15 minutes to review the items and

plan their dish, and then 30 minutes for the cook-off.

Throughout the ballroom, seven culinary stations featured international creations from favorite recipes submitted by the eight chefs who were competing on the stage. With more than 30 recipes from seven different countries, the international food stations were staffed by The National Conference Center and presented such favorites as Pan-Seared Beef Tenderloin with Green Peppercorn Red Currant Reduction submitted by Chef Murray Hall from Canada, Cured Salmon Carpaccio with Horseradish Cream from Chef Jason Weaver of the USA, and Rhubarb and Champagne Gelatin with Ginger Crust submitted by Jamian Lewis from the United Kingdom. Chef Lewis went on to win the Eighth Annual Copper Skillet Award.

Tom Bolman, Executive Vice President of IACC, commented that “the food and beverage team really surpassed our expectations for the Annual Conference. They managed to pull out all the stops and impressed a very discerning crowd. Chef Mason showed his flair for imaginative and innovative cuisine. “

Executive Chef Craig Mason has brought several dining trends to The National Conference Center such as “farm-to-table,” which allows local farmers and vendors to provide us with their freshest produce and more. He also promotes “food-for-thought” dishes (also known as brain-friendly food) to help cognitive retention and enhanced performance. Lastly, he follows the East Coast's sustainable seafood list to ensure that the facility does their best to conserve Earth's water resources.

With almost 15 years of culinary experience, Executive Chef Craig Mason brings his passion for cooking, knowledge of hospitality's food and beverage trends, and sense of humor to The National Conference Center's 10,000 square foot kitchen each morning. Here, Chef Mason and his team prepare almost 3,000 meals on a daily basis.

Find this article at: <http://ftnnews.com/mice/12149-the-national-conference-center-culinary-team-wins-accolades-from-iacc.html>