



The Art of Food

By Maralyn D. Hill



Later this month Sherrie Wilkolaski, our Editor-in-Chief, and I will be in Lyon, France, to attend Sirha, one of the finest hospitality tradeshows, which incorporates the French Pastry Cup and finalizes with the Bocuse d'Or—an "Olympics of Food Flavor and Talent." After being invited many times by my friend, French Master Chef Hervé Laurent, he finally convinced me to attend in 2009. It was awesome and I was hooked.

This show is every two years and each time, it just keeps getting better. In addition to having the finest food, wine and hospitality purveyors, competition in twelve display kitchens for young talented chefs worldwide (who have competed to represent their country or region), the educational opportunities are overwhelming.

A total of eighteen contests will showcase professionals worldwide with their skills and passion from food, coffee and catering industries. The Chefs' area will host three most prestigious gastronomic competitions in the world: Bocuse d'Or, Coupe du Monde de la Pâtisserie 2015 and the International Catering Cup.

This year, Sirha will be presenting a new version of Le Food Studio laboratory. It will have an urban look in the heart of the exhibition. At each of the three venues, the partners will unveil experimental concepts developed exclusively for Sirha. The spatial layout is being entirely revamped to highlight new creations inspired by 2015 trends identified by Frédéric Loeb.

The studio will feature "Culinary photography by Omnivore;" "Bridor explores postmodern cuisine;" "Alain Ducasse Education cultivates excellence;" and "Danger de Mordre", an off-the-wall display of street food trends.

For five days, the Sirha TV-conference set in Le Food Studio, which is accessible all day to Sirha visitors, will offer 150 experts, chefs and exhibitors a chance to air their views.

Le Food Studio, showcases producing trends that are the heart of culinary innovation. "In each of the three areas of the Food Studio, our partners Omnivore, Bridor and Alain Ducasse Education will reveal the experiments and research they have carried out exclusively for Sirha 2015, in a series of unprecedented demonstrations,



offering solutions for improving products and services across the hospitality and catering sector.”

If you were to ask me, which part of the show is a highlight, it would certainly be Bocuse d’Or. However, I thoroughly enjoy all aspects.

The week starts with the Coupe du Monde de la Patisserie 2015. Rules have evolved and changed and candidates will face new challenges for their creations from chocolate and sculpted ice. The pastry talent is worldwide, with countries that made the final cut being from: Algeria, Argentina, China, Columbia, Denmark, Egypt, Guatemala, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tunisia, United Kingdom, and United States.

Each team will be comprised of a pastry chef, chocolate specialist and ice-cream maker. During the six hours of the contest, they will need to create three chocolate desserts, three frozen fruit desserts, and

twelve desserts on a plate, as well as three artistic creations, one of sugar, chocolate and sculpted ice.

In the competition, at the beginning, you see detailed ice sculptures the first day and wonder how can it get better, as each one glistens with the reflection of the light. But each category shines through. Whereas each category is amazing, the sculpted piece stands on its own as a work of art.

I use the time while the chefs are working to visit various purveyor booths, as the best in the industry are on display with their corporate chefs preparing exceptional samples. I certainly have booths and sections that I am partial to visiting, but it all is intriguing and tasty, including the exceptional wine and champagne. Discovering the latest for the hospitality industry is also intriguing and always fun to discover what turns up where.

Each country does an outstanding job showcasing its best. While, some





countries are more into the food scene than others, and newcomers may not know the first year or two just how important this event is.

Chefs from around the globe come to witness the young talent, visit various booths, network, and spend time in Le Food Studio. One does not run out of items to see or places to visit. Even though you may tire, you're reinvigorated with all of the energy around you. Competition is broadcast via internal television, so you do not need to miss any of the excitement.

New for 2015 is The World Cuisine Summit—a guide to understand quick-changing food services. It will be held on January 27 in the heart of Sirha, and I imagine I will be checking this out while the preliminary part of Bocuse d'Or is starting. The WCS will be overseen by its executive





officer, Frédéric Loeb, and the event will offer solutions for corporate heads, executives, marketing, R&D, catering managers and chefs. Creative and strategic topics will be covered with commentaries from experts, chefs, managers, designers and researchers from various backgrounds. Debate topics will be:

- Fewer resources, more solutions
- Starting and running a business in a difficult environment
- Innovating for a better world
- Solutions from chefs, artisans and designers for a rapidly changing world.

The 2015 Bocuse d'Or Finale is January 27 and 28, in Lyon. I've referred to it as an "Olympics of food from talented chefs." That was my first description after attending initially in 2009. But when researching to do this article, I gained insight into the history that confirms my description.

"History of the contest – In 1987, Paul Bocuse had the idea of creating a show-like contest inspired by major sporting events. The objective was also to highlight the chefs' unique expertise.

Today, every two years, the Bocuse d'Or welcomes 24 promising young chefs from five continents for a grand final. Their challenge is to prepare two dishes within 5.35 hours, live in front of an enthusiastic public. A jury composed of 24 chefs, representing 24 nations, considered to be among the most prestigious chefs in the world, is set up to judge their gourmet creations. It will be presided over by Paul Bocuse, the emblematic founder of the event. Created by chefs for chefs, the Bocuse d'Or is more than a mere contest: it is a show, a celebration,

a springboard for talents, and a gastronomic arena where the culinary cultures of the world come to life."

The objective has always been to broaden its network of talented chefs, as well as welcome new countries and cultures. "Its selection process requires that the gastronomic culture of participation nations be highlighted, in particular through the choice of ingredients that are used in the recipes." Today, 3,500 chefs in almost one hundred countries



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make up the network of excellence, where they share the same values and contribute to Bocuse d'Or running smoothly.

The twenty-four countries taking part in Bocuse d'Or 2015 are: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Japan, Malaysia, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Spain, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States.

As soon as 2015 is complete, competition will start around the world in 2016, preparing for being honored to compete in the 2017 competition—a true Olympics of food. I'm hooked, but then I've always admitted to appreciating food at every level.

To learn more go to www.Sirha.com and www.bocusedor.com.

