

FLAVOR IN ACTION

Recent happenings in the world of flavor development

BIG FISH IN BOSTON

Late February marked the 26th annual International Boston Seafood Show, attracting nearly 18,000 buyers of seafood products and processing equipment to the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. Attendees enjoyed chef demonstrations, a new product competition and plenty of samples of the newest seafood products on the market, from dim sum assortments to seafood sausage and spice rubs and sauces.

Winning the new product competition in the food-service product category was Chef Papillote, a line of proprietary, patented frozen-meal packages inspired by the traditional French method of cooking in parchment paper, or "en papillote."

SeaWatch and Johnson & Wales University sponsored the first annual Creative Clam Challenge. William Long, a senior at Johnson & Wales College of Culinary Arts in Providence, R.I., won \$2,500 with Southern Classic Clam and Grits, made with SeaWatch's chopped sea clams.

"We had an overwhelming response to the Challenge, with more than 300 attendees voting in a two-hour time frame. The creativity and innovation that the students put into these recipes were really remarkable and delicious," says Guy Simmons, SeaWatch's VP of marketing and product development.

"FARM TO TABLE" TOUR

In late April, the USA Rice Federation hosted a day-long "From Farm to Table" experience in Louisiana for 35 culinary professionals, who got a first-hand view of how domestic rice reaches our tables. The group toured Jeff Durand's family rice and crawfish farm and enjoyed an authentic Cajun lunch of U.S.-grown rice and other local foods prepared by chef Patrick Mould of the Louisiana School of Cooking.

"More so today, people want to know where their food comes from," said Mould. "I like to use products that are indigenous to the region I am cooking in, and our rice stacks up to any rice grown in any other part of the world. It's very high quality, cooks well, and there are many different varieties."

"About 88 percent of the rice consumed in America is grown in the U.S.," noted Clarence Berken, a Louisiana rice farmer and chairman of the USA Rice Council, who pointed out that domestic supplies go far beyond white rice. U.S. rice farmers produce an abundant supply of short, medium and long grain rice, as well as jasmine, basmati, arborio, black japonica and more.

CULINOLOGY IN THE NORTHWEST

In March, Seattle was home to the Research Chefs Association's (RCA) annual Conference & Culinology Expo. Dedicated to beloved chef and RCA founding member Bill "Pops" Hahne, who recently passed away, the conference opened with a reception offering tastes from several Seattle restaurants. Starbucks Senior VP of Global Food & Beverage Denny Marie Post delivered the keynote address, focusing on consumers' struggle to adopt healthy eating habits and on Starbucks' growth efforts.

Culinology-centered sessions covered such topics as the next generation of oils, myths of molecular gastronomy, whole grains in product development and ice cream formulation. Another session looked at trends from Australia, and *Flavor & The Menu* contributor Dr. A. Elizabeth Sloan gave an information-packed presentation on mega-trends affecting the foodservice industry. Seattle chef Tom Douglas led a panel of regional chefs in a discussion of the flavors that make the Pacific Northwest a prized culinary destination.

At the Culinology Expo, attendees had a chance to see new food technology and sample new products and on-trend, stand-out flavors like Paramount Farms' pistachio-lavender ice cream, the National Peanut Board's Yucatan Pork Crepas with Peanut Barbacoa Mole Sauce, Wild Flavors' bacon-and-egg cotton candy and Stuffed Honey-Chipotle Pecan Picholines served by Azar's chef, James Brisson.



At the RCA Conference, Elizabeth Sloan highlighted consumer trends with the greatest impact on the industry.