

Culinary conquistadors poised to cook up storm

By Jessie Moniz

With razor sharp knives and grim determination, Bermuda's culinary chieftains will battle it out when the Escoffier Cup semifinals kick off at the end of this month.

The Escoffier Cup is a part of the 'Bermuda Gourmet Getaway' weekend to be held at various venues throughout the Island from February 28 to March 2. This will be the fifth time that a senior professional culinary competition with internationally recognised rules and standards has been held in Bermuda.

The goals of the competition are to continually raise the standards of culinary excellence and professionalism, promote camaraderie and educational opportunity among culinary professionals, and act as a staging area for chefs to research and develop new culinary concepts.

The preliminaries will be held at International Imports Demonstration Kitchen commencing at 6 p.m. on January 24 and will continue every week at 6 p.m. until February 14. Each qualifying event will feature four talented chefs, and consists of live cook-offs where the chef has only 25 minutes to prepare three portions of his recipe, with only the winner of each weekly qualifier moving forward to the Escoffier Cup Finals.

The competition follows the contemporary guidelines laid down by the American Culinary Federation for hot food competition. Individual competitors fabricate and prepare a finished product based on the choice of four protein categories.

This year's qualifying challenges are: January 24 - 6 p.m. Maple Leaf Duck Breast Cook-

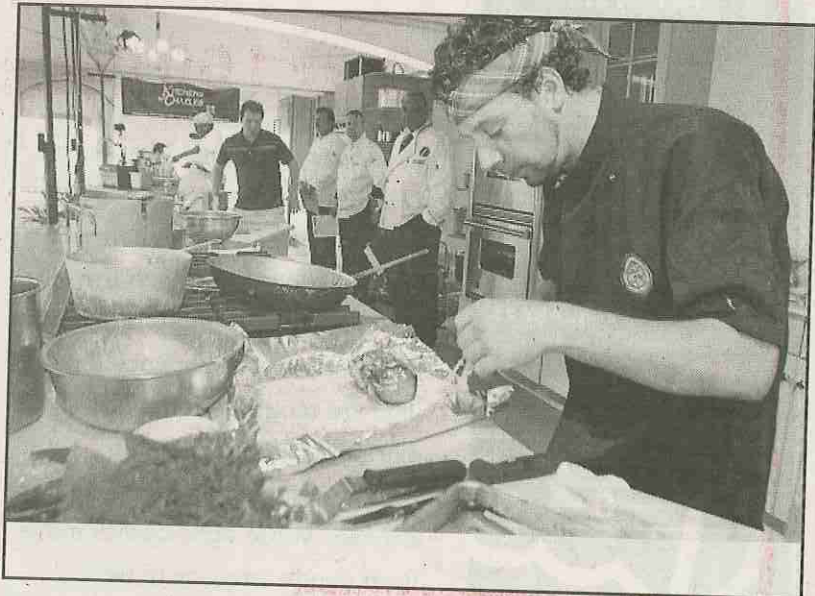
off, January 31 - 6 p.m. Foley Fish Georges Banks Scallops Cook-off, February 7 - 6 p.m. Hormel Pork Tenderloin Cook-off and February 14 - 6 p.m. Certified Angus Beef Strip Loin Cook-off.

Luckily, it's to the onlooker go the spoils. During the competition, food-lovers get a chance to sample their own tasting portion of each of the four dishes, watch the action, learn invaluable cooking techniques as explained by the MC, executive chef Jon Pritchard of Café Coco, receive recipes, and enjoy wines paired especially for each dish, donated by Gosling's, the official wine supplier of the Bermuda Gourmet Getaway.

Tickets are \$75 each, with the entire proceeds going to Friends of Hospice and the Bermuda Culinary Development Fund. The four finalists then go "head-to-head" live 'Iron Chef' style in

a specially designed dual kitchen (courtesy of Bermuda Gas, Viking Professional Equipment and Design Associates) at the Gourmet Getaway Viking Village, to determine the winner of the Escoffier Cup and the title of Bermuda's Best Chef. The last Escoffier Cup finalists were: Vijayakumar Velayudhan of Seahorse Grill, Beat Muller of the Newport Room, Gerry Adams of Salt Rock Grill, and the Escoffier Cup winner Terry Clark of Seahorse Grill.

Rahman (Rock) Harper, winner of the Fox TV series 'Hell's Kitchen', produced by Gordon Ramsay, will host this year's Bermuda Gourmet Getaway as well as the Escoffier Cup Finals on Sunday, March 2. For more details on the 2008 Gourmet Getaway contact Michelle Halpin on 278-8895 or visit www.bermudagourmetgetaway.bm.



Seasoned for battle: One of last year's Escoffier Cup finalists, Gerry Adams of the Salt Rock Grill. Last year's winner was Terry Clark of Seahorse Grill.