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Who is BDA's best chef?

Bermuda's top chefs will have their culinary skills challenged over the next four weeks.

The Escoffier Cup qualifiers will take place on Thursdays with the winners advancing to an Iron Chef type challenge for the Bermuda Gourmet getaway weekend on February 29 to March 2.

This event is notable as 2008 will be the fifth time that a senior professional culinary competition with internationally recognized 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 6pm on Thursday, January 24 and will continue every Thursday at 6pm until February 14. Each qualifying event will feature four talented chefs, and consists of live cook offs where the chef has only twenty-five 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.

Customers will have the opportunity to watch the chefs in action, learn invaluable cooking techniques as explained by the Emcee, Executive Chef Jon Pritchard of Café Coco, sample their own tasting portion of each of the four dishes, receive the recipes for the four dishes and enjoy wines paired especially for each dish, kindly 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. Please join us, and book soon!

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, will host this year's Bermuda Gourmet Getaway.

The Escoffier Cup

This year's qualifying challenges will take place on Thursdays at 6pm at the International Imports Demonstration Kitchen:

January 24: Maple Leaf Duck Breast Cook-off

January 31: Foley Fish Georges Banks Scallops Cook-off

February 7: Hormel Pork Tenderloin Cook-off

February 14: Certified Angus Beef Strip Loin Cook-off
