

For Hotel, Resort, and Casino Food & Beverage Professionals

Hotel F&B Executive

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OUT OF THE BLUE

Genuine Menus at IHG's Hotel Indigo

In Indigo's Golden Bean, from left, Gabriele Webster, In-Keeper; Lesley Maxwell, lead In-ter-tainer; and Jim Anhut, senior VP brand development, InterContinental.



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PULSE OF THE INDUSTRY

ovens “gas is better.”

When asked to name the piece of equipment she couldn't live without, Plano instantly points to her KitchenAid stand mixer, similar to one that might be used at home. Even though it's relatively small, “you can do many things with it,” says Plano, like whipping cream and egg whites.

Plano also couldn't live without a dough sheeter and just replaced a 20-year-old Rondo with an Italian-made Kenplex. Other tools she relies on include a basic wooden rolling pin. She likes silpat silicon lining sheets. Although silpat is relatively new, and she managed without it before, “now that we have it I don't think I could work without it.” Plano also has a preference for All-Clad pots and pans and has a set at work and at home.

Plano notices that Americans have a sweeter tooth than the French, so the sugar in her pastries and frostings often gets ramped up. Plano doesn't see much difference in the quality of ingredients in the States and those in France, with one caveat: “the butter in France definitely tastes much better. That's probably what I miss most about French food.” There's good butter in the States, says Plano, but it lacks the creamy intensity of French butter. Butter is the only shortening used in Plano's kitchen, and each week she uses about 250 pounds of the European-style butter Plugra.

Using a combination of her handy dough sheeter and a goodly portion of Plugra, Plano makes 250–350 croissants a day, of which she personally eats about three. Fortunately, she is blessed with average stature, and people are always surprised to find out she's a pastry chef and not overweight. When not in the kitchen, she works out, bikes, swims, and skis.

As pastry chef, Plano is also responsible for ice creams, candies, and sorbets. Her favorite pastry, and the one most popular with Ritz Carlton guests, is Parisian macaroons—almond macaroons with filling sandwiched between them. In an era when most people have never eaten anything other than the “jet-puffed” variety, Plano makes her own marshmallows. “I try to do everything myself as much as I can. I don't want my name associated with something coming out of a box if I don't have to,” she explains.

Plano believes in taking her cue from each season's offerings. “I don't like to make a strawberry dessert in the middle of December . . . there is a season for everything and I respect that a lot.”

Although Plano has the training to do “show-pieces,” big confections with masses of spun sugar, she prefers to focus on flavors and textures over visuals. “Desserts must look nice when you serve it on a plate, but sometimes you see pictures in magazines and wonder how it made it from the kitchen to the table because it's so artistic . . . I admire people who do competitions, but I'm more into taste . . . if it looks nice but

If the chef is the brains of a kitchen, equipment must be a vital organ. And nothing is more important than ovens. We briefly took the pulse of oven and range manufacturers and discovered a diversity of technology.

CHEF CONTROL. Alto-Shaam moved toward eliminating boiler units in their combi ovens, according to Chef Robert Simmelink, Alto-Shaam's corporate chef. Humidity control is not lost, due to water injection through the fan; however, no water filtration is required. High-tech digital controls remain, thus maintaining temperature and cooking times. Additionally, a new computerized temperature monitoring system is available. Chefs can oversee temperatures in their ovens and walk-in coolers, and converter units are available to work with the software, letting chefs manage both maintenance and food quality issues. Contact: Robert Simmelink, 800-558-8744, Roberts@alto-shaam.com, www.alto-shaam.com

MINI-COMBIS. Frank Schmidt and Scott Applebee of Electrolux explained their “system approach” to the kitchen. Electrolux manufactures combi ovens with the addition of a blast chiller. Through this process, it requires approximately 90 minutes to bring food down to 36–38 degrees. You can re-therm in the same oven. The most



exciting news is their mini-combis. These portable units fit a half hotel pan. Plug it in and you're off to pure combi oven creations. The humidity is controlled through vents and yields the same good results.

CONTACT: Scott Applebee, 866-331-7958, scott.applebee@electrolux.com, www.foodservice.electrolux.com

HIGH-PRODUCTION KITCHENS.

Enodis has a strategic alliance with the Halton Group, explains Dean Landeche, VP of marketing for Enodis. You can expect to see Enodis' innovations for high-performance kitchens of the future. For those of us living now, Enodis makes life easier with the Merrychef Accelerated and Lincoln DTF ovens. Both units work in synergy with the Delfield Liquitec Refrigeration system. Together they create a compact high-production food center. CONTACT: Dean Landeche, 727-569-1172, dLandeche@enodis.com, www.enodis.com

CUSTOM APPLICATIONS.

Montague is dedicated to building the finest ovens for a specific use. That dedication is evident in both their pizza deck ovens and muffled convection ovens. Daniel Garvin of Montague explains how the pizza ovens are totally brick lined and the “fire brick” holds “fantastic” heat. The muffled convection ovens are designed to circulate the air in the cooking cavity without changing it from outside, like most convection ovens. This keeps the cooking chamber temperature consistent, which positively impacts production. CONTACT: Daniel Garvin, 707-569-9696, dgarvin@sonic.net, www.montaguecompany.com



SELF-COOKING OVENS. Peter Schon, president of Rational USA, enlightened us on the cooking possibilities with a Rational oven. Push-button technology aids in cooking a wide variety of foods, while the computer monitors and adjusts time or temperature for “incredible” finished product. Schon says “the oven can do almost anything, except load food,” so you still need someone in the kitchen. Features include settings for roasts, grills, poultry, fish, baking, side dishes, and Finishing®. CONTACT: Peter Schon, 888-320-7274, peters@rationalusa.com, www.rationalusa.com



COOKING SPEED AND MORE.

TURBOCHEF LAUNCHED THEIR HIGH H BATCH OVEN. Steve Beshara, chief branding officer for TurboChef, brought us up to speed on the new High H Batch. He describes the “five S's” of the Turbochef as: 1) Speed, as “it cooks 10 times faster than conventional ovens.” 2) Satisfaction, because “customers love the hot fresh food while operators love the ease of use.” 3) Smart, as the oven does not require a hood or fire system and can be programmed for 72 menu items, 4) Size, given the oven is small, but it fits a full sheet pan, and 5) Selection, because “the oven cooks a wide variety of product.” CONTACT: Brian Pember, 866.90TURBO, brian.pember@turbochef.com, www.turbochef.com



—Keith Branche

doesn't taste good, you get nothing, just a sight of something. If it looks nice but tastes good then you not only get a sight of something but something good for your tummy.”

Plano's staff shadows her movements so they can execute her recipes faithfully when she's not there. As insurance, pastries are photographed to guarantee the presentation never varies.

At home, Plano prefers not to bake. She'd rather cook something savory. If she has a dinner party she asks friends to bring dessert. Many are intimidated when they discover she's a pastry chef, feeling they could never bake anything that would live up to her standards. Yet, says Plano, “In the States, most home bakers make the best pies or cookies you could ever find, so I really enjoy having people bring me sweet dishes.”

Considering her hours, Plano admits it can be hard to have much of a personal life. Most of the people she dates are in the business, either chefs or bartenders, who understand. But she doesn't feel her job is incompatible with marriage and family. “I want to have kids and I'm sure there is a way to do it. And if there's not I'm going to create a way.”

In an era when the French aren't particularly esteemed, Plano claims she enjoys living in the States. America is seen as the best place in the world for working women, and Plano affirms that. “Ever since I was a little girl I wanted to be a pastry chef and live in America. It is a country for opportunity . . . if you want to do something and you work hard, it can happen.” ☘

Beth Rogers is a frequent contributor to HOTEL F&B EXECUTIVE.

Our Article

GET THE SCOOP

What does ice cream mean to people in the hospitality industry? Most likely it is not something we give much



thought, but if you are serving well over 100,000 scoops each year, it might be an issue.

Executive Pastry Chef Steven Evitts of the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York must plan and execute ice cream service to thousands of people every day. For banquets and restaurant operations, Chef Evitts uses prescooped ice creams from Philip R's Frozen Desserts. “In the View Restaurant, atop the Marriott Marquis in Times Square, we serve six scoops of ice cream or sorbet on one dessert; and we sell about 300 to 500 each night,” explains chef Evitts.

He also appreciates the flexibility associated with Philip R's preportioned ice creams and sorbets.

Preportioned desserts cater to the multiple size portions and variety of flavors hotels require, as well as a demanding delivery schedule. Plating desserts for large banquets requires consistency. Chef Evitts is delighted with the consistency of Philip R's preportioned ice creams and sorbets.

Prescooped ice cream saves time and that means money. Chef Evitts says he can dedicate his staff to more productive ventures than scooping ice cream for banquets, not to mention the space it would require to undertake that task. Chef Evitts and Philip R's have been a team for more than three years and he sees no reason to change.—Keith Branche CONTACT: Philip Rotondo, 781-721-6330, philipjr@icecream-desserts.com, www.icecream-desserts.com