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NORTHPOINTE CHEF WINS CULINARY COMPETITION

Competing against top chefs from around the country is thrilling – winning is even better.

That's the lesson Executive Chef Mark Moran learned when his name was announced as USA Champion Chef of the Copper Skillet Culinary Competition sponsored by the International Association of Conference Centers (IACC), and earned the right to represent America at the international competition.

Each year IACC sponsors an ambitious worldwide contest to showcase the culinary excellence of all of its members. Chefs from all of its 325 hotels and conference center membership are invited to compete. The first round of the rivalry begins the submission of a recipe of a signature entree, and a host of conference dining menus. The best of these are selected by group of professional culinary judges, and the winners are invited to participate in the final round.

The final round of the competition takes the form of an *Iron Chef* competition to determine who will be the "Chef of the Year." Each of the *Final Four* contestants are provided with an array of basic staple food items along with a "mystery basket" of fresh produce, grains and two protein ingredients. The contents on the mystery basket are unknown to the competitors until fifteen minutes prior to the starting gun. At that time the chefs are required to survey all of the food products on hand and race to develop a recipe which they must then prepare in a matter of only thirty minutes.

This year's final event took place in the New York City area. A panel of professional culinary experts from outside the IACC membership graded each chef in three categories covering twelve criteria. The competition was intense, but when time was Chef's Mark's dish of chicken with crab sauce was judged to be the best of the best and he was crowned USA Champion – Top Chef 2009.

For the past six years Chef Moran has headed the culinary team at ***The Conference Center at NorthPointe***, managed by Sodexo Conferencing and located at 9243 Columbus Pike, Lewis Center,

Ohio. Larry Pearl, Senior Vice President of Sodexo Conferencing stated that he was delighted with Moran's victory, but not surprised.

"NorthPointe has long been one of our top culinary teams," said Pearl. "They are very creative and stay in touch with the latest market trends," he continued. Mr. Pearl explained, "We at Sodexo consider the competition an excellent way for its chef's to hone their skills while showcasing the division's talents."

The final worldwide competition will take place in March at IACC's Annual Conference at Château Élan Winery & Resort in Braselton, Georgia. At that time winning chefs from Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, the UK and the United States will compete to crown the "World Champion Chef."

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