

Denise Cornellier's golden plate is her golden ticket to Banff

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The Gazette

Wednesday, October 29, 2008

Montreal chef-caterer Denise Cornellier will head to Banff in February to represent Montreal in the Gold Medal Plates national chefs' cooking contest to raise funds for Canada's Olympic athletes.

Cornellier was handed the challenge after winning the gold medal in the contest's 12-chef Montreal round last Thursday with her Jerusalem artichoke soup topped with a fritter made of Gaspé crab and a tiny ball of foie gras ice cream. Priding herself on using only Quebec ingredients, Cornellier, widely regarded as the city's top caterer, made a bit of history for the annual Montreal Gold Medal Plates contest as the first caterer to compete, and was the only woman in last week's contest.

Gilles Herzog, chef at Derrière les fagots in Ste. Rose, won the silver medal. He marinated red tuna in soy, ginger and sesame, then seared it and served it with butternut squash purée and citrus chutney.

The bronze medal went to Deff Haupt, chef at Renoir, who topped a large seared scallop with orange and ginger foam and a crisply dried slice of orange. The scallop formed the centre of a remarkable flower; its petals were paper-thin slices of beet that the chef called beet carpaccio.

Cooking for about 750 guests at the Palais des congrès, the chefs paired their creations with Canadian wines - most from Ontario, with two from Quebec. The judges - local food writers (including myself) and two chefs - agreed that some chefs went overboard with complicated dishes that blurred flavours.

Cornellier will compete in Banff with Toronto winner Patrick Lin of Senses, Ottawa/

Gatineau winner Charles Part of Les Fougères in Chelsea, Que., and the winners of contests planned for November in Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. Besides their presentation dishes, they'll each create a meal from a surprise "black box" of ingredients.

Fat for thought

Prize-winning cookbook author Jennifer McLagan of Toronto will cook dishes from her new book, *Fat: An Appreciation of a Misunderstood Ingredient, with Recipes* (McClelland & Stewart, \$37.95), Nov. 29 at Bon Appétit Cookbooks. The book has caused a stir in our cooking pots because of the preponderance of low-fat or no-fat nutritional advice and cookbooks.

McLagan, who won a James Beard award for her first book, *Bones* (Morrow, 2005), considers animal fat one of the best ingredients to cook with, and says it's better for us than trans fats and the refined carbohydrates that so many of our diets contain.

Her cooking demonstration

is free, and there will be tastings. Reservations are required.

Call the store, located at 388 Victoria Ave. in Westmount, at 514-369-2002.

A DNA dinner

Montreal chef Derek Dammann of DNA restaurant will teach a dinner menu at Bon Appétit Cookbooks on Nov. 17 at 6:30 p.m. Dammann, whose Old Montreal restaurant has garnered good reviews and who worked as chef de cuisine for Jamie Oliver at his London restaurant Fifteen, is expected to demonstrate dishes with his usual bold flavours and Italian themes. Price is \$95. The class is limited to 10 students. Call 514-369-2002.

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