

## **25<sup>th</sup> Annual APC National Pie Championships in Orlando Announces Best Pie Makers in the Nation**

*Pie-fection the Word at National Competition, Naming Best in  
Commercial, Professional and Amateur Sweet, Savory and Sugar-  
Free Pies*

ORLANDO (April 18, 2019) – The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual APC National Pie Championships was held April 12 and 13 in Orlando at the SeaWorld Orlando Renaissance Hotel. Here, amateur, professional and commercial bakers from throughout the U.S. and Canada entered their most delicious pies in both sweet and savory flavor categories for bragging rights to be named the nation's best.

More than 200 judges “endured” the hardship of taste-testing the incredible selections each day of the competition. Volunteers traveling as far as California descended in Orlando all for the love of the nation's most beloved and revered traditional confection – the all-American pie.

A total of 728 pies were entered in the three divisions, 129 flavor categories and sponsor-specific contests during the 2019 competition. Among attributes, pies were judged on flavor and creativity, as well as first and overall impression.

### **Commercial Division**

Bakeries from across the nation and Canada competed in 129 flavor categories. First place blue ribbons were awarded for the best commercial pies in each flavor category, with top honors going to Harlan Bakeries with 19 blue ribbons. Winning pies from Harlan Bakeries, in Avon, Indiana, included Bursting from Berries, Chocolate Maple Sugar Crème, Honey Crisp Apple, Cheesecake Pecan Brittle and Peachy Keen. Weston Foods followed close behind the leader, with 18 blue ribbons.

### **Professional Division**

145 professional pies were entered in this division, with David Eaheart, from Kansas City, Missouri, winning Best of Show for his Iceland's Café Loki-Inspired Rye Bread Cream Pie. Layered with a cream filling, toasted rye bread, piped meringue and a caramel sauce drizzle, this pie is based on Café Loki's Rye Bread Ice Cream, which Earhart discovered on a walking food tour of Reykjavik.

### **Amateur Division**

Rhonda Hull from Little Rock, Arkansas, took home the Best of Show win in the

amateur category from 185 entries. Based on a recent trip to Alaska, Hull's Denali Caribou Crunch Pie pays tribute to the majestic caribou she saw amidst the mountains of Denali National Park. Layers honoring the colors of the caribou set atop a crunchy, chocolate cookie crust: white chocolate mousse with cookie and caramel cups, followed by a caramel-pecan layer, and topped with a chocolate mousse-like layer with white chocolate pearls and white chocolate-coated waffle cones.

### **Savory Pot Pies**

An emerging favorite, savory pot pies were added as a category among all three divisions four years ago, much to the delight of heartier pie lovers. This year, first place ribbons were awarded for five savory pot pies. Professional Michele Stuart's Creamy Traditional Chicken Vegetable and amateur Beth Campbell's It's Your Clucky Day Chicken Pot Pie won their respective categories. Three commercial winners were pot pies as well: Spinach and Feta from World of Pies LLC, and the Premium Pizza Pot Pie and Traditional Premium Chicken Pot Pie from Southeastern Grocers/Synergy Food Group.

### **Sugar-Free Sweet Pies**

The No Sugar Added Sweet Pie category challenged bakers to use alternative sweeteners to achieve their unique recipes. In the professional category, Publix took home both wins for the No Sugar Added Portion Control category for their apple and blueberry varieties. The Premium No Sugar Added category was led by Something Sweet, Harlan Bakeries and Weston Foods. Harlan Foods also represented strongly in the Family No Sugar Added category with seven of the 10 top slots, alongside Jessie Lord Bakery, Southeaster Grocers/Hill and Valley, and Walmart, Inc. Sunset Grill's no-sugar added apple pie also won for one of the independent slots.

### **Best Vacation Pie**

This year, both the amateur and professional Best of Show winners happen to come from the new, Best Vacation Pie category, proving that pie still holds that uncanny ability to transport people to a happier time and place. Bakers also submitted a one-paragraph description with their entry showcasing how the pie represented their favorite vacation. Professional David Eaheart's passport was stamped with top honors for his Iceland's Café Loki-Inspired Rye Bread Cream Pie. Rhonda Hull's Denali Caribou Crunch Pie won for the amateur division.

### **Comstock/Wilderness Best in Show**

In this flavor-packed category, each Comstock/Wilderness entry was required to use a filling consisting of an entire can of Comstock filling, as well as four additional ingredients of the baker's choice. Flavor categories included apple,

cherry, blueberry, peach and strawberry. One top winner in each category was named a Best in Show candidate and Ron Bronitsky's peach pie was chosen to represent the category at the overall Best of Show competition. Take Stock in Your Strawberry Pie, by Lisa Sparks, topped the professional. The following amateurs won for their respective divisions:

Apple – Naylet LaRochelle, Caramel Drizzled Apple Pie

Blueberry – Hunny Lee, Delightfully Creamy White Chocolate Blueberry

Cherry – Hunny Lee, Chocolate Cherry Cream Cheese Brownie Pie

Peach – Ron Bronitsky – Melba's A Peach of a Pie

Strawberry – Joseph Cacciola – Parisian Sunrise Strawberry Pie

### **Guittard Chocolate Pies**

Entrants were required to use only Guittard chocolates, including Guittard Organic 66% Semisweet Chocolate wafers in their recipe. Amateur Beth Campbell took top spot for her Berry Delish Guittard Chocolate Pie. In the professional division, Harlan Bakeries' Chocolate Maple Sugar Crème won for family pie, Weston Foods' Guittard Chocolate Cherry Pie won for the premium pie, and Rocky Mountain Pies' Sea Salt Caramel Chocolate Silk won for super gourmet. Michele's Pies secured an independent win for its Chocolate Walnut creation.

### **Dobla Summer Orange Creamsicle**

A twist on the classic Creamsicle flavor, chefs had to incorporate specific Dobla chocolate **decorations** in these orange-and-cream inspired pies. Christopher Taylor won the professional division with his Tropical Orange Cream Pie, and Rhonda Hull won the amateur division with a Dobla's Summer Sunset Pie.

### **Emile Henry Prettiest Pie**

While flavor is of utmost importance, one cannot discount the allure of a creatively decorated pie. With the most distinctive, contemporary and eye-catching ceramic pie dishes in the industry, Emile Henry sponsored the "Prettiest Pie" category among all of the pies. This year's winner was **Melinda Johnson with her Chocolate Covered Strawberry Pie, which also took a third place in the Cream Flavor Category.**

"All of these pie enthusiasts represent the best of the best in the pie-making industry," said Linda Hoskins, Executive Director, American Pie Council. "Over the past 25 years, we've grown our pie family of members, while continuously spreading and upholding one of America's most time-honored traditions through generation after generation – the art of pie making. We're proud of our 25 years fostering America's love affair with pie and can't wait to see what our bakers cook up over the next 25 years!"

Once judging commenced, pie industry icons took to the stage in ongoing seminars that provided everything from tips and the latest industry research to demonstrations showcasing new baking techniques. Chef Joe DiPaolo of Pinnacle Foods and Meg Harris of Conagra Brands demoed the art and science of pie thickeners while Chef Josh Johnson, from The Guittard Chocolate Company, focused on the flavor impact of layers and textures. Chef Monica Kate of Dobra showed bakers how to create a unique “pie”-dentity using Dobra chocolate confections.

For more information on the American Pie Council, the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual APC National Pie Championships, and a complete list of winners, visit [www.piecouncil.org](http://www.piecouncil.org).

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