

# Going for Gold:

## An Introduction to Cold Food Competition



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### **Disclaimer**

Attendance of this class is not a guarantee of achieving any medal in ACF or WACS competition, whether judged by myself, any of the certified judges assisting with this course, or any other certified ACF or WACS judges. Areas of judging culinary entries are subjective. The intention for this class is to inform attendees on how to create a product which they can be proud of, and to an extent, to help competitors understand how that product might be viewed within the context of a sanctioned ACF or WACS culinary salon.

This class is being given by a certified ACF/WACS competition judge on a volunteer basis; there is no compensation or expectation of payment in any way. This class is meant to be an educational session with the goal of elevating ACF and WACS sanctioned competition in our region, and to help our members achieve their professional goals while minimizing frustration and maximizing ACF/WACS participation.

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### **a. Introduction to cold food competition**

The concept itself of cold food competition can be a challenge to understand initially, and by itself can hold chefs and students back from entering their first cold food competition.

The history of "Cold Food" is deeply rooted in the history of our craft. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, before refrigeration was present in every kitchen the techniques of cold food production allowed a chef to create beautiful and delicious platters which fully utilized products and were preserved by curing and glazing.

When modern chefs practice cold food competition, we are celebrating our history and pushing ourselves to achieve a level of refinement that is rarely found in our everyday routines.

Whereas hot food competition is about what a chef can produce in a limited amount of time, cold food competition is predicated upon demonstrating what a chef can do with greater resources and fewer time constraints.

The benefits of cold food competition are many. A professional culinarian will learn greater attention to detail, take their mise en place skills to the next level, and will network with like-minded professionals during their competition career. Earning the highest awards available in cold food can also pave the way to becoming a competition judge, allowing professionals the ability to pass along the knowledge and skills which they have attained.

The highest levels of international competition are rooted in cold food competition; having a solid foundation in cold food work can allow a professional to travel internationally, competing at the highest levels which allows for greater networking, additional educational opportunities, and international certifications.

The bottom line with all culinary competition is to make sure that you are invested in the long term professional benefits that are achieved through competition rather than the awards that can be attained.

## **b. Equipment Checklist**

Acrylic- Used to place items onto after glazing. Acrylic is ideal because it is non-porous, light-weight, and can be cut easily into whatever shape is needed.

*\*\*Available from Home Depot or Lowe's*

Bain-Marie- Filled with hot water, this is used to round off glazed pieces and remove unwanted aspic.

*\*\*Available from Amazon.com*

Blow Torch/Cake Tester- Used for popping bubbles in aspic while glazing.

*\*\*Available from Amazon.com*

Brushes- Used to touch up aspic on leafy greens, also to brush cracker dough with egg white if needed.

*\*\*Available from Hobby Lobby, Michaels, or Amazon.com*



Cafeteria Trays- Previously used during the glazing process before acrylic became commonplace. Now used when creating wraps and other items that need to set on a perfectly flat surface.

*\*\*Available from Amazon.com*

Camping Stove- Used to warm a bain marie of water so that excess gelatin can be removed during the glazing process.

*\*\*Available at Amazon.com, or anywhere that sells outdoor supplies*

Cheesecloth- Used to strain aspic, in combination with a chinoise.

*\*\*Available from Amazon.com*



Chinoise- Used to strain aspic, in combination with cheesecloth.

*\*\*Available from Webstaurant.com, Restaurant Depot, or Amazon.com*

Cracker Punch- These can be used to make precise crackers in different shapes.

*\*\*Available at Michaels and Hobby Lobby.*

Cutting Board- Used for slicing terrines or other cutting work, always with a damp cloth underneath to prevent slipping.

*\*\*Available from any retailer*

Chafing Dish- A warm chafing dish is used when glazing, with a perforated insert and damp towels, to help remove excess aspic when glazing.

*\*\*Available from Costco or Sams Club*

Digital Micrometer – Used to ensure the uniform thickness of terrine slices, garnishes, and placement.

*\*\*Available from Amazon.com*



Dipping Forks- Used to dip items into aspic. These come in many shapes and sizes, and are usually used for dipping into chocolate.

*\*\*Available from JBPrince.com, listed under Chocolate Tools*



Food Safe Shellac- Used to coat crackers and other dry items not suitable for aspic.

*\*\*Available from Albert Uster in Gaithersburg, MD*

Gloves- Gloves are ALWAYS worn when glazing, to prevent the appearance of finger prints and transference of oils from the skin.

*\*\*Available from any retailer*

Large Glass Bowls- Used to store aspic when glazing; glass is not a good conductor of heat, and helps the aspic to retain temperature. Since it is transparent, it also aids in finding impurities in the aspic while working.

*\*\*Available on Amazon.com*

Molds- These can come in all types of varieties. Terrine molds and silicone molds are the most popular.

*\*\*Available from JBPrince.com, or at store.chicagomoldschool.com for silicone molds*



Perforated Pan- Used in conjunction with a chafing dish; this helps keep aspic warm, and provides steam for towels to allow for draining of excess aspic during initial glazing.

*\*\*Available from ACityDiscount.com, Webstaurant.com, or from Restaurant Depot*

Plastic Wrap- Used to cover the work table to make for easier clean up.

*\*\*Available at Costco or from any broadline supplier*

Rolling Pin/ Pasta Sheeter- Used for rolling cracker doughs out to desired thickness.

*\*\*Available at Amazon.com*

Sausage Poker- Used to remove air pockets from terrines during production, and can also be used to pop bubbles in aspic during the glazing process.

*Available from multiple sources, my favorite comes from Towncutler.com*



Sand Paper- Used to sand crackers, vegetables and fruits to a smooth, consistent finish. Ideal sand paper is 200 grain wet/dry paper, found in hardware stores or online.

*\*\*Available at Home Depot, Lowes, or Amazon.com*

Sharpie- This is used for marking trays as the glazing progress progresses.

*\*\*Available at any retailer*

Side Towels- Used for many different purposes.

*\*\*Available at Amazon.com*

Small Offset Spatula- Used to move large items during the glazing process.

*\*\*Available at JBPrince.com, my favorite two come from TownCutler.com*



Sterilite Containers/ Fish Bins with Lids- Used for transportation and glazing to keep ridges off of pieces.

*\*\*Available at Walmart*

Styrofoam Blocks- When tooth picks have been placed in the Styrofoam blocks, these are used to dip multiple pieces at one time. A typical platter would require around 4 blocks of Styrofoam for dipping all pieces. Blocks should be wrapped in plastic wrap.

*\*\*Available at Michaels or Hobby Lobby*



Syringe- These are used to pull air bubbles from warm aspic. An example would be utilizing a syringe to pull bubbles from a freshly laid chemise on a silver platter.

*\*\*Available at Amazon.com*



Teflon Coated Hobby Iron- Used to remove excess aspic after all coats have been applied. After each use of the hobby iron, press and wipe the iron on a wet side towel.

*\*\*Available at Michaels, Hobby Lobby, or Amazon.com*

Thermometer- Used to monitor the temperature of aspic during the glazing process. Instant read thermometers are excellent; laser thermometers are even better.

*\*\*Available on Amazon.com*



Thermos- This is used to carry extra aspic at the proper temperature to the setup for last minute touch ups.

*\*\*Available for purchase at Amazon.com*



Tooth Picks- Used to pick multiples of the same product, before dipping in aspic.

*\*\*Available at your local grocery store, or online at Amazon.com*

Tweezers- Used for dipping small, delicate items in aspic, such as baby greens.

*\*\*Available at Amazon.com or JBPrince.com*



*Xacto Knives- Used for shaping crackers or for detailing vegetables. Can be used for a variety of other functions.*

*\*\*Available at Michaels or on Amazon.com*



## **c. Creating a Cold Food Program**

### **1. Define the theme**

The first step to creating a cold food program, after choosing your category, is to select a theme for your menu. Select a theme that is meaningful for you, whether it represents the region where you are from or a particular cuisine that you are passionate about. The process of cold food competition can be tedious and exhausting; I find that it helps when you are excited about the food that you are working on, and your passion for the menu will ultimately lead to a better finished produce.

### **2. Determine the proteins that will be used**

After selecting your theme, you will want to choose which proteins to feature. If you are traveling for your competition and taking your terrines with you, you will likely need to select something "sturdy" like pork or poultry. If you are competing locally or will be preparing your terrines after arriving at your destination, seafood becomes more viable.

### **3. Determine flavor profiles**

Once your theme and protein has been selected, you will need to refine your flavor profiles. For example, if you choose "Flavors of Fall" and "Pork", then you will likely choose flavor profiles that might include seasonal ingredients like yams and sweet spices.

### **4. Research current methods and trends**

Now that you have an idea of what you will be preparing, you will need to make sure that your entry is relevant based on current culinary trends and within the context of contemporary culinary competition. For instance, if the entries at the IKA last month were trending smaller, more detailed and more natural, then you would not likely put together a program that is highly fabricated, large, and lacking in detail.

### **5. Create the menu**

Based on the theme, the protein selection, flavors and current trends, you can now write your menu.

### **6. Practice!**

Competition is not the place to try something for the first time. The person who wins will likely be the person who is the best prepared. Practice your program in your home kitchen and photograph it. Freeze the pieces so that you can lay it differently if a thought hits you on the way in to work. Send out the photographs to competitors and judges in order to get as much feedback as possible.

Too many competitors are reticent to send photos of their work to judges, feeling that their work is "unfinished" or perhaps out of concern that they will be viewed negatively. All competitors and all judges started out in the same place, and needed help from someone to get where they are. Judges are ACF volunteers, and are passionate about helping fellow chefs achieve the refinement that they are working towards. Please do not ever hesitate to reach out to competitors or judges for advice. You never know when you'll make a new friend and it could mean the difference between a gold and a silver.

**Pro tip:** When planning your menu, make sure that the menu is seasonal for the time of year in which you will be presenting. Also, it is useful to make sure that you are using ingredients that are sturdy enough to travel i.e. Brussels sprouts for a salad, instead of mache leaves.

#### **d. Terrine Preparation**

Terrine - a meat, fish, or vegetable mixture that has been cooked or otherwise prepared in advance and allowed to cool or set in its container, typically served in slices.

When planning your menu, it is important to plan to showcase different preparations. Each platter should show case a variety of preparations to include hot set, cold set, natural and wrapped. One piece should showcase a lean portion of the protein; meaning little manipulation is done to the muscle piece itself. While preparing the pieces, steps will need to be taken to ensure that they look the same from the moment it is sliced until the moment that the table is broken down. Dry curing or brining will give the product more time to be exposed on the show room floor.

#### **Cold Set**

- Cold set refers to a terrine that is set by allowing the terrine to set by introducing it to a colder environment. Most commonly this is done with an aspic. See image below for example in an heirloom tomato terrine. Other methods to achieve such results can be done by using products such as potatoes. The result here is that the starch of the potato is taking the place of the gelatin in the aforementioned terrine. The challenge of these preparations in glazing is done incorrectly can result in losing shape on the item. This makes it crucial to get a great brush coat on the pieces.
- The use of aspic normally is done with the mold already being set up for the aspic to be poured in to set the terrine. In the example of the image the tomatoes are in place before pouring in the tomato aspic. As well terrine mold is already lined with plastic to make the removal process easier.



*Heirloom Tomato Terrine. Tomatoes are peeled and split. Then set in a tomato aspic made from a double batch of consommé.*

### **Hot Set Terrines:**

- "Hot set" refers to a preparation where heat is applied to achieve the desired result. This method is normally for protein pieces as the applied heat causes the protein to denature and "set".



*The above images are both hot set terrines in different stages of development.*

### **Base Mousse**

#### Ingredients

- 400 g Lean Protein (Chicken is versatile and works well here)
- 1 ea. Large Egg
- 100 g Cream (Qimiq can be substituted here)
- 10 g Salt

#### Procedure

- If a Paco Jet is available, freeze the ingredients in a beaker over night. The next day, pacotize twice to achieve desired consistency.
- If a Paco Jet is not available, grind the protein with a fine grind die before blending all ingredients in a VitaPrep on high speed. Pass the mousseline through a tamis if a blender was used for preparation.  
\*\*Note: If using a blender, place top in freezer before blending to help keep the temperature low during production.

### **Chlorophyll Extraction**

#### Ingredients

- 1 qt. Water, ice cold
- 4 oz. Spinach
- 2 oz. Shallots

#### Procedure

- Puree all ingredients thoroughly in a Vitaprep until fully blended
- Strain through a chinoise
- Place the puree into a sauce pan and bring to a simmer
- Set up a bain marie with a chinoise on top, lined with a coffee filter which has been held in place with a rubber band
- Fill the chinoise half-way with ice
- Ladle the warm chlorophyll mixture over the ice; the ice will melt, liquid will pass through the filter, and solid chlorophyll will remain on the coffee filter.

### Additional Tips and Tricks for Terrine Production

- -When producing terrines, retain a small amount of each mousseline that is used. These mousselines can be reserved in small pastry bags and can be used during slicing to "patch" any air gaps that remained in the terrines during the production phase.
- -Meat, fish or poultry terrines should rarely, if ever, exceed a proportion of 60% lean, 40% mousseline.
- -Intricate inlays can be achieved by manipulating a smaller amount of the protein or garnish and par-freezing it before adding it to the terrine.
- -Activa is a protein coagulant that is extremely useful in bonding items containing protein together when producing terrines. Activa can be mixed with egg white powder if additional protein is needed in a particular application. Activa sets in about five hours, but can be expedited at a temperature of 110 degrees.

### **Wrapping your terrine**

- Wraps can be executed hot or cold. They can also include vegetables as wraps i.e. mushrooms, leeks, etc. Commonly hot set wraps are produced by a mousseline produced from the trim. A cold set can utilize flavors that work well together and be achieved in multiple ways, for example, either by utilizing pastry relief mats or pouring.



*These three terrines have been wrapped; the first is a cold set, the second is a cured meat, the third wrap is a chaud froid.*

### e. Cracker Production

There should be at least three crackers present in any kind of cold food presentation. The crackers should all vary in composition and style in order to show a range of skill and to avoid redundancy.

The types of crackers that are produced for cold food competition will likely include, but are not limited to the following styles of crackers:

#### **Pipeable Cracker Dough**

Pate Choux-type dough: puffs slightly while baking

- Made and baked on a silpat
- Typically flat
- Can be as thin or as thick as wanted, by using the corresponding piping tip



*Piped cracker garnish*

#### **Shaped Cracker Dough**

Can use dry pasta, eggroll wrappers or cracker dough recipe

- Makes extremely thin and delicate looking crackers
- Always 3-D



*Shaped cracker garnish*

#### **"Cut Out" Cracker Dough**

Can use Goya empanada doughs (best for colored), eggroll wrappers, Wonder Bread or cracker dough recipe.

- Baked at an extremely low temperature for a long period of time
- Can be flat or 3-D
- Can be cut into any shape desired



*Cut out cracker*

Below are recipes for two different types of crackers which are made from scratch. There are also commercial products available which produce suitable results, depending on the end result which you are seeking:

-Products that can be used to substitute "from-scratch" production:

- Goya empanada dough (available in white, yellow or orange, available at Compare Foods)
- Wonder bread
- Wonton wrappers

#### **Pipeable Cracker Recipe:**

- 6 Egg Whites
  - 355 ml AP Flour
  - 100 ml Melted Butter
1. Combine egg whites, flour and melted butter in a blender.
  2. Blend on high until consistency is extremely smooth.
  3. Pipe into desired shape on Silpat.
  4. Season top of crisp and bake immediately at 300 degrees.

#### **Herb Cracker Dough Recipe:**

- 94 g All Purpose Flour
  - 1 g Salt
  - 1 g Baking Powder
  - 21 g Shortening
  - 47 g Whole Milk
  - As Needed Herbs
1. Mix flour, salt, baking powder and shortening in mixer.
  2. Add in milk until just combined.
  3. Let rest for minimum 30 minutes.
  4. Roll thin and cut into desire shapes.
  5. Bake crackers at 300 degrees.

## **Shellacking Crackers for competition**

For shellacking crackers for cold salons, I use a food safe shellac which is available from Albert Uster in Gaithersburg, MD.

- Place crackers onto a piece of parchment paper, on a table that has been wrapped with plastic wrap. In a sweeping motion, approximately two feet away from the cracker, lightly spray a coat onto each cracker.
- Allow each coat to dry for approximately 20 minutes before applying the next coat.
- Each cracker should receive approximately 8-12 coats of shellac, front **and** back. Sand any rough edges with 400 grit, water-proof sandpaper.

### **f. Slicing**

Terrines, or any item which is sliced, should always have completely uniform slicing and spacing. For this task, tools will include an extremely sharp slicer, a cutting board, a bain marie filled with water, a side towel, and a digital micrometer. A "Mitre Box" can help with producing uniform cuts, especially when the competitor isn't extremely practiced at slicing yet.



*Custom mitre box used for slicing even portions of terrines for competition*

When slicing anything for a competition, make sure to take advantage of the full length of your slicer. Slices should be made in one swift, smooth motion in order to prevent having "stair steps" or places where you can tell the knife changed directions.

When slicing terrines, especially cold set terrines, dip the blade of the knife into a bain marie of hot water before making your slice. This will reduce the amount of drag during slicing and allow the knife to move through the product without disturbing intricate garnishes.

When slicing terrines, it is imperative to keep them in the order in which they are sliced. Sliced pieces should be lined up on acrylic, using a permanent marker to number the slices as they are placed onto the acrylic so that they remain in the order in which they are sliced. This is done so that they are lined up in the correct order when laid on the platter. If not, the garnishes within the terrine will not be aligned and the aesthetic will be negatively impacted.

During the slicing process, pockets may become apparent inside the terrines where air was present and wasn't removed during the production phase. These pockets can be easily filled or "patched up" with raw mousseline. Cold food is judged based on the aesthetic and isn't designed to be eaten; it is acceptable to use a raw mousseline to cover a blemish during the slicing process.



### g. Aspic

There are three brands of gelatin that are generally used in cold food competition: Knox, Great Lakes, and Custom Collagen. All three are culinary-grade collagens, but have differing levels of quality and will provide a different result.

General information regarding gelatin:

-The lower the bloom, the lower the strength of the gelatin (Custom Collagen is 300 bloom, Knox is 225 bloom).

-The higher the bloom, the lower the temperature at which it sets.

-Adding 1% granulated sugar by weight when producing gelatin creates a better sheen for the gelatin.

**Knox:** Knox is considered to be the lowest quality of gelatin and contains the most color as an aspic. It remains useful in that it is a low-cost gelatin, which is great for using to create products that don't need to be super clear. It is recommended that a higher-grade gelatin is used for glazing aspic. Knox can be purchased in most grocery stores, from broadline providers, or from Amazon.com.



**Great Lakes (225 bloom):** This gelatin is a grade above Knox in terms of clarity and is a favorite of many competitors. It was used widely among international competitors around 2010 and is still used by many because of its clarity and reliability. It can be found on Amazon.com, usually with next-day delivery.



**Custom Collagen (300 bloom):** This brand offers the highest clarity and is used by many current international competitors. This brand requires some experience, as it can be less reliable than Great Lakes or Knox. It can be found on Amazon.com, usually with next-day delivery.



### Basic aspic preparation:

1. Add powdered gelatin slowly to cold, distilled water in a stainless mixing bowl by sprinkling it over the water while turning the bowl. Patience is key during this step; if you add the gelatin too quickly then dry pockets of gelatin will form in the water.



2. After the gelatin is incorporated, cover and let bloom (saturate) for one hour. At that time, the gelatin can then be melted down gently by placing the bowl over a pot of lightly simmering water.



3. Melt the gelatin down in the double boiler, letting it warm through to a temperature between 95- and 110-degrees Fahrenheit. Bringing the temperature any higher could discolor the aspic, creating an unwanted appearance. Raising the temperature of the aspic over 115 degrees can also break down and weaken the aspic.



4. Strain the aspic through a chinois which is lined with a cheesecloth. Once all of the aspic is strained, transfer to a hotel pan. While in the hotel pan, use a torch and syringe to remove any air bubbles. After the aspic has cooled to room temperature, transfer to a cooler to allow it to fully set.



*Ladle the aspic into the chinois*



*The syringe can remove bubbles and impurities*

5. Once the aspic has hardened, cut the aspic into pieces that will fit into cryovac bags. Remember that aspic has a high protein content and must be refrigerated just as any other protein would.

#### **g. Aspic (continued)**

\*If you are preparing a flavored chemise or chaud froid, the gelatin can be added directly to the liquid which you are using, whether it is a chlorophyll stock or a dairy product such as 2% milk. Follow the same steps as above to create the desired results.

-For general glazing purposes, use a ratio of 16 ounces of gelatin to 1 gallon of distilled water.

-For a medium-strength aspic, use a ratio of 12 ounces of gelatin to 1 gallon of distilled water.

-For consommé, use 3 sheets of gelatin for 1 quart of consommé. Add garnish as you pour the consommé in layers in order to give the appearance of the garnish "floating" in the clarified stock.

-Custom Collagen has a higher bloom, making it a stronger gelatin. A ratio of **14 oz. to 1 gallon** of water is ideal when glazing with Custom Collagen for the same result that you would get when using 16:1 with Knox or Great Lakes.

-The higher the bloom the higher the glazing temperature will be, especially if you've added sugar to it. Lower temperatures make it difficult to work with.

-Always wait 20 minutes in between coats in order to allow the previous coat to set up completely before applying the next coat of aspic.

-Before preparing aspic, make sure that all vessels are immaculate, and gloves are worn. Any oils that meet the aspic will be picked up on the product during the glazing process.

#### **Sauces for use in cold food competition:**

##### **Demi Glace recipe (cold food competition):**

3 oz. jus

Couple drops of Kitchen Bouquet for deep color

Couple drops of Liquid Smoke for aroma

1 oz. corn syrup

##### **Cream sauces (cold food competition):**

6 oz. condensed milk

3 oz. gelatin

Add coloring as needed

##### **Olive Oil:**

When competing with a gastronomic menu, a BB can be used to make an indentation on a sauce in order to make a space to inject "oil" with a syringe.

Saffron gelatin injected on top of the indentation will replicate olive oil

## **h. Glazing**



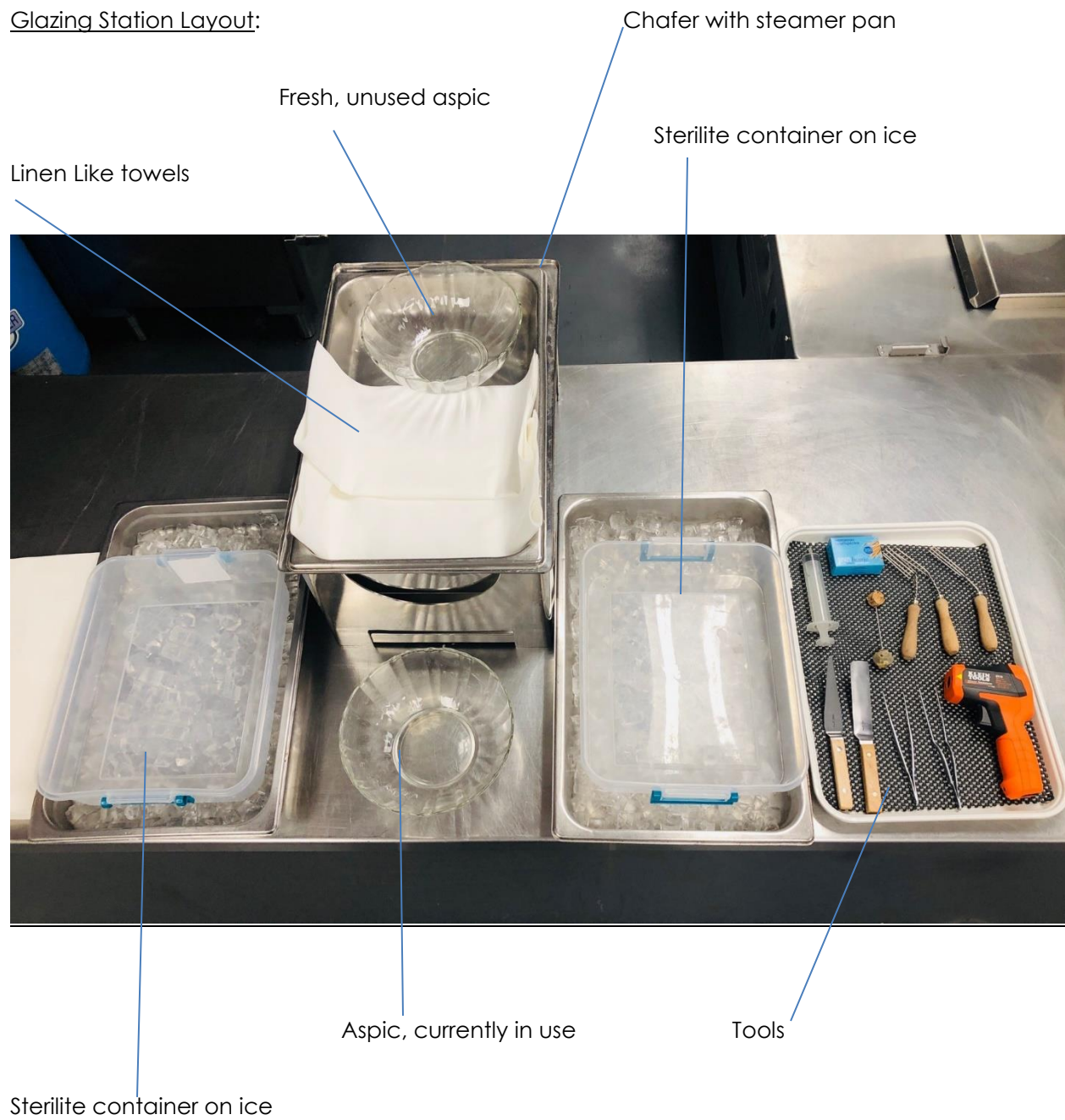
One of the most essential steps of cold food competition is glazing; while many of us can produce great food that is aesthetically appealing, glazing is a technique that few of us have had exposure to.

You will need the following in order to set up your glazing station:

- Chafer
- "Linen-Like" towels
- Sterno
- At least two glass bowls for aspic
- 2 hotel pans with ice or ice packs
- Acrylic sheets which can fit in the hotel pans and Sterilite containers
- Styrofoam blocks wrapped in plastic wrap
- Toothpicks
- Thermometer
- Dipping Forks
- A bain marie of water on a camping stove (to hold tools warm and for cleaning excess aspic)
- Small hobby iron for cleaning excess aspic
- Light and magnifying glass in order to closely inspect each glazed piece for bubbles or other imperfections
- Cafeteria tray to organize tools for easy access

## h.Glazing, continued

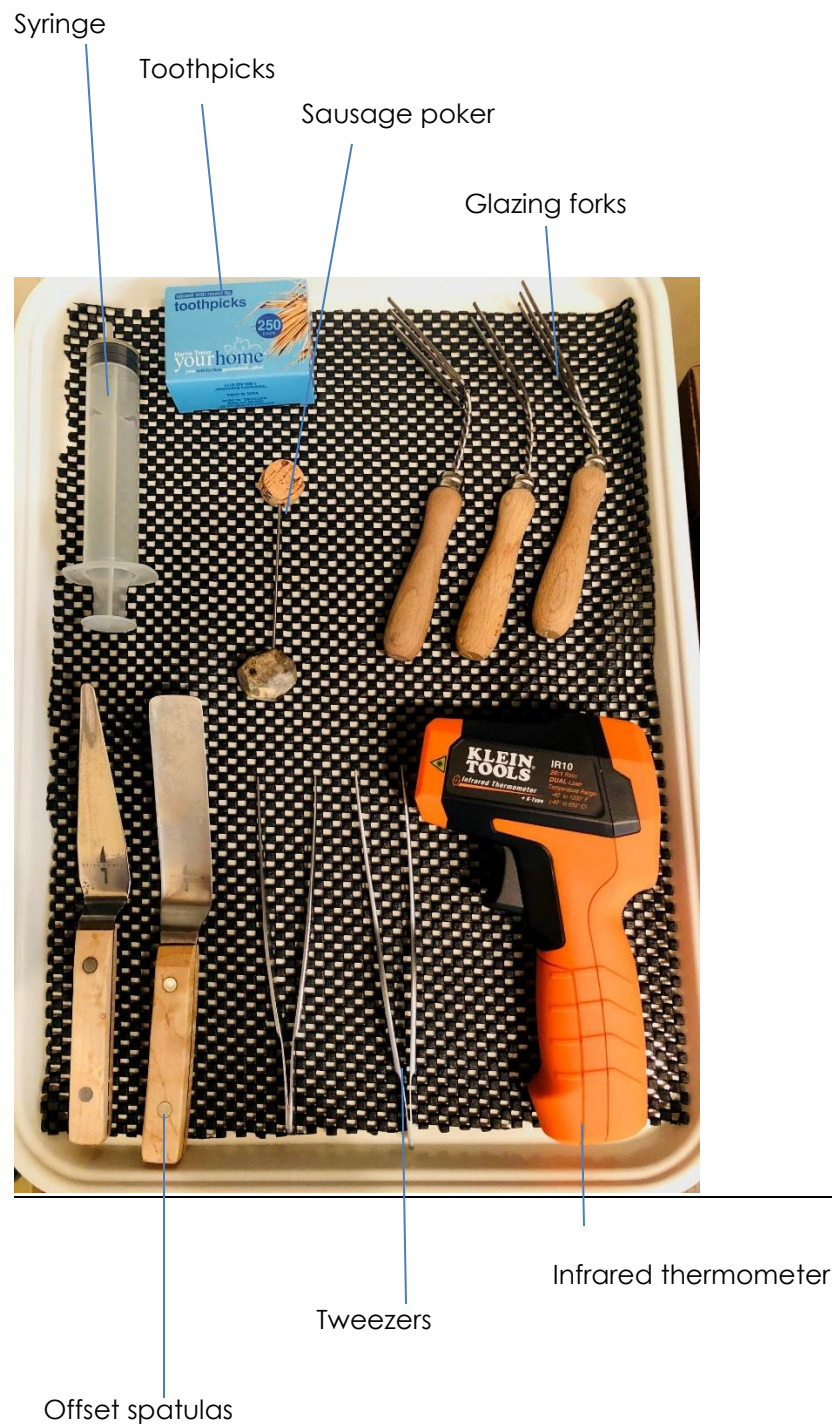
### Glazing Station Layout:



\*\*Sterilite containers should have a custom-sized piece of acrylic in the bottom of each

\*\*You will also need a bain marie of water on a camping stove which will be used to clean tools

## h. Glazing, continued





## h.Glazing, continued

### Sliced Pieces:

1. Pieces should be arranged in order of slicing, facing the same direction and numbered on acrylic.
2. Pieces should be "mopped" or brushed with an initial coat of aspic.
3. Pieces are then dipped into aspic, one by one, carefully at a 45-degree angle so that bubbles will slide off as they enter. Come directly out of the aspic without letting the product sit in the aspic for any amount of time.
4. Sliced pieces should be placed onto the warm Linen-Like towel in the chafer for a count of two, in order to allow any excess aspic to be removed.
5. The sliced piece moves from the towel onto a clean piece of acrylic; repeat with each piece, maintaining the order in which they were sliced and the direction which they are facing.
6. The head piece should be dipped using sturdy offset spatulas. The initial coat is usually the most difficult. Subsequent coats will be easier, since the spatulas will have more friction with the chilled aspic on the head piece and it will be less likely to slide off into the aspic.
7. Glaze sliced pieces and head pieces a total of three times, plus the initial brushing.

### Vegetables:

1. Vegetables should be picked on wooden toothpicks, then placed on a Styrofoam block in order to expedite the glazing process.
2. Lifting the Styrofoam block, the vegetables should enter the aspic at a 45-degree angle and then come directly out.
3. Glaze vegetables three times.



### Salad Greens:

1. Greens should be soaked in ice water to crisp them before dipping.
2. Using tweezers, dip the leaves into the aspic one at a time, then place onto Linen-Like towel to allow the excess aspic to come off.
3. Place the salad greens onto acrylic and refrigerate. Salad greens only receive **one coat** of aspic.

**\*\*Garnish may be added to the aspic to make it present as a salad dressing before dipping.**

## **h.Glazing, continued**

### General Tips and Tricks for glazing:

-On hot items presented cold, the appearance of "roasting" can be created by caramelizing sugar on the surface of a product, then adding teriyaki or Kitchen Bouquet to the initial coat of glazing.

-Use a linen-like towel to remove fat from fatty proteins like salmon before dipping

-Soak greens in ice water to crisp them before dipping

-When saucing a plate, the sauce should be applied to the plate while warm, allowed to set up, then lightly brushed with aspic when chilled.

- At every step, make sure to keep your product chilled. This will maintain the freshness of the product, which will not only make it show better but will also extend its life once it is displayed.



## **h.Glazing, continued**

### Cleaning Glazed Pieces:

When pieces are glazed, inevitably there will be an excess of aspic in areas which will require cleaning. Depending on the care given during the glazing process, this can become the most time consuming aspect of glazing.

Tools required:

- Bain marie of hot water on a camping stove
- Small hobby iron
- Petty knife
- Side towels which have been dampened

I have found that most cleaning can be done using a warm bain marie. The rounded shape of a bain marie lends itself well to removing aspic quickly and evenly.

### Cleaning Glazed Product:

Remove vegetables from their picks by using a petty knife. Remove the pick from the Styrofoam, then rotate the edge of the petty knife around the toothpick to slice through the layer of aspic.

Gently pull the vegetable from the pick. Once it has been removed, the rough part of the aspic can be gently swiped against the side of the warm bain marie, which will even out the coat of aspic and will reseal the hole from the pick. The side with the hole in it should always be out of sight once you are laying your plates or platter.

## i. Cold Food Presentation

### Platters: What material do I use?

Technically, any non-porous material can be used for a platter. Silver used to be the medium of choice but has largely fallen out of favor in the past 15 years. The materials that we see the most of today are acrylic, wood, glass, and various other man-made materials. If wood is used, it should not be painted, but rather should be shellacked and highly polished.

Do not use painted wood, or any platter that has obvious imperfections. The platter should accentuate the appearance of the product which is being presented and shouldn't become a distraction.

### Platters: Design

If a platter is being designed for a specific menu, the items should first be laid out on a poster board or parchment paper in order to understand the spacing. Lay out your ideal presentation, then create the design of the desired platter with a permanent marker. The poster can then be given to the manufacturer to create the desired shape.

Once you have your platter, use dry erase marker to "lay out" your food before production.



*The layout of the products has been sketched onto the platter with dry erase marker in order to mock up the platter layout before competition*

### Platters: Create the service point

The first step in "laying" a platter is to create an identifiable service point, just as if a guest were going to approach your platter at a buffet.



*This photo is taken from the service point of the platter, the access point which a guest would use to help themselves to items on the platter if it were available on a buffet.*

## Platters: Creating Strong Lines

When laying a platter, one of the most important skills is to be able to create “strong” lines as opposed to “weak” lines.

A strong line creates unity, flow and direction, pulling your eyes across the platter to multiple focal points. Strong lines are visible from across the room, and the strength and clarity of these lines can make the difference between medals. Strong lines are created by slicing pieces to a uniform thickness, laying them with uniform spacing, and then following the natural lines of the piece as it relates to the shape of the platter.

Weak lines have the opposite effect. They do not pull your attention across the platter, or give a sense that each item on the platter was laid with intent and purpose.

Strong lines create flow, weak lines disrupt and prevent the platter from having a sense of unity.



Weak Lines



Strong Lines

#### Platters: Quantities

A platter should contain a portion of each item for eight people. All terrines should be sliced into at least eight portions but can be sliced into sixteen or even twenty four. Make sure to perform a final count on your platter before stepping away when you are competing in a cold food category; too many competitors have fallen victim to fatigue and have including the incorrect number of portions on their platter for judging.

#### Platters: Complimentary Condiments

Condiments of some type are required for platters in ACF and WACS cold food competition. The two condiments should each be a different type and can be a vinaigrette, aioli, salsa, or a chutney.

The condiments should be present on the show plate, and should be presented in goose necks next to the platter which have been filled no more than 2/3 of the way full.

### Platters: Show Plate

When preparing the "show plate" for your platter, the items on the plate should be arranged in the order in which they appear on the displayed menu. Dressings should also appear on the show plate.

### Platters: Final Presentation

Once all of the elements come together, you should have a menu with a theme, complimentary flavors, seasonal ingredients, presented with strong lines on a well-designed platter, accompanied by a fresh and seasonal salad which is off the platter, two dressings with vessels 2/3 of the way full, and a show plate which reflects the menu and has correct portions based on platter presentation. The table is clean and uncluttered.



*This platter was judged as a silver medal, winning Best In Show in London at Hotelympia in 2018*

### Hors d'Oeuvres:

Hors d'Oeuvres should weigh between 12-18 grams after glazing (use a scale!) and should be able to be eaten conveniently with one bite. Cold hors d'oeuvres should obviously be able to be served cold, and hot hors d'oeuvres should obviously be able to be served hot. Picks are allowable, but they should not be served in vessels. Hors d'Ouevres should be displayed in the order in which they appear on the printed menu.

### Gastronomic menus:

All dishes should be presented as if they were being served in a restaurant; hot food should appear to have been prepared and served hot, with cold food appearing fresh and chilled.

Dishes should be arranged in the order in which they appear on the menu.

### Notes regarding presentation:

-Lighting is usually a welcome addition to any display, since most venues will not have lighting that is amenable to the presentation of your work.

-Do not use table displays that distract from the food itself. Tables are not scored, and a busy or overly colorful table display can create a negative impression. Go for clean, simple, tasteful, elegant presentations.

### **Pro Tip:**

**-Johansson Silver Smith in Rhode Island was used by Team USA 2016 for their International competitions.**

**-Piedmont Plastics in Charlotte will custom cut acrylic platters to your specification and can even laser cut the edges for a "jewel" finish.**

### **i. Packing for competition**

Cold food competition is difficult when it is local, in your hometown. The challenge is significantly greater when you are packing everything that you need and travelling in order to compete. The following tips should make travelling significantly easier:

- If you are traveling with terrines and will glaze after landing or driving, transport your terrines in the molds in which they were produced in.
- Print labels onto color-coded address labels so that your items can be easily found and identified.
- Use a packing list, as well as an ingredient list to ensure that you don't forget anything before heading out the door.
- When flying, pack everything knowing that it will be tossed across the room.
- Crackers should be packed into a Sterilite container or similar. Cut Styrofoam to fit the bottom of the container, then pick the crackers onto the Styrofoam. If flying, use wooden toothpicks.



*Crackers packed for travel*

## i. Packing for competition (continued)

Packing lists make travelling for competition much less stressful, both in getting out of the building and while in transit. These lists were created with OneNote. The Packing Checklist helped me identify where all of my items were, and ensured that I wouldn't have to worry about exceeding weight limits at the airport. The Ingredient Checklist is a color coded list that ensured that I had all ingredients for all dishes.

### Packing Checklist

Thursday, November 15, 2018 5:49 PM

#### Pack in cooler - less than 45 lbs.

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shrimp terrine      | <input type="checkbox"/> Cucumber rounds  | <input type="checkbox"/> Butternut squash        | <input type="checkbox"/> <del>Swt.</del> Potato/crème fraiche/quinoa |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pressed duck confit | <input type="checkbox"/> Baby greens      | <input type="checkbox"/> Baby carrots            | <input type="checkbox"/> Dauphine potatoes                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quail eggs          | <input type="checkbox"/> Sliced radishes  | <input type="checkbox"/> Pickled root vegetables | <input type="checkbox"/> Acrylic                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pheasant terrine    | <input type="checkbox"/> Baby radishes    | <input type="checkbox"/> Gribiche                | <input type="checkbox"/> Fish boxes                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beef wellington     | <input type="checkbox"/> Celery root      | <input type="checkbox"/> Mushroom ragout         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pastry              | <input type="checkbox"/> Baby fennel      | <input type="checkbox"/> Short rib ragout        |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aspic, 1 gal.       | <input type="checkbox"/> Brussels sprouts | <input type="checkbox"/> Pickled Mustard         |  |

#### Pack in trunk - less than 45 lbs.

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immersion circulator  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tablecloth                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Risers for display        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lexan                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Tools, knives                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Napkin for hors d'oeuvres |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gloves, lg. and small | <input type="checkbox"/> Bain <del>marie</del>                |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Towels                | <input type="checkbox"/> Toothpicks for glazing               |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plates, 10 ea         | <input type="checkbox"/> Wrapped <del>styro</del> for glazing |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inverters x 2         |   |  |

#### Crackers, travelling as a personal item

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maple leaf crackers | <input type="checkbox"/> Black garlic <del>tuile</del> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rye crisps          | <input type="checkbox"/> Crisp trumpet mushroom        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wing crackers       | <input type="checkbox"/> Potato crisps                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cracker for lobster |  |

#### Personal Items

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chef Coats     | <input type="checkbox"/> Black socks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aprons         | <input type="checkbox"/> Chargers    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal items |                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White t's      |                                      |

### Luxemburg Ingredient Checklist

Thursday, November 15, 2018 4:58 PM

#### Proteins

- ☐ Shrimp Terrine w tomato
- ☐ Pressed duck confit
- ☐ Quail eggs x 4
- ☐ Pheasant and squash terrine
- ☐ ~~Truffled~~ lobster terrine
- ☐ Beef Wellington

#### Vegetables

- ☐ Cucumber rounds
- ☐ Baby greens
- ☐ Sliced radishes
- ☐ Baby radishes
- ☐ Lg. diced celery root
- ☐ Baby fennel
- ☐ Brussels sprouts
- ☐ Butternut squash, med. Dice
- ☐ Baby carrots
- ☐ Pickled root vegetables

#### Sauces

- ☐ Gribiche
- ☐ Mushroom ragout
- ☐ Braised short rib ragout

#### Crackers

- ☐ Maple leaf crackers
- ☐ Rye crisps
- ☐ Wing crackers
- ☐ Cracker for lobster

#### Starch

- ☐ Sweet potato and crème fraiche w quinoa
- ☐ Potato crisp
- ☐ Dauphine potatoes

#### Misc.

- ☐ Pickled mustard
- ☐ Black garlic ~~tuile~~
- ☐ Crispy trumpet
- ☐ Walnut crumble

#### Fruit

- ☐ Port poached pear ~~parisienne~~
- ☐ Medium diced apple

#### Hors d'Oeuvres

- First Course-Pheasant
- Second Course-Potato Salad
- Third Course-Lobster Waldorf
- Fourth Course-Beef Wellington
- Fifth Course-Dessert



## i. Packing for competition (continued)

Below is a prep list for a competition on November 26<sup>th</sup>; crackers were created and shellacked 10 days out, but could have been done at any time. Items were produced before leaving for the competition, then terrines were sliced the night before the competition and all items were glazed overnight.

### Luxemburg prep list

Thursday, November 15, 2018 2:44 PM

<b>Friday 11/16</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wing Crackers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maple leaf cracker <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Black garlic tulle	<b>Saturday 11/17</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Duck Confit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rye Crisps	<b>Sunday 11/18</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crème fraiche and tomato for shrimp <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quinoa Cake <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crème fraiche for quinoa <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut mirepoix for ragout	<b>Hors d'Oeuvres</b> <b>First Course</b> <b>Second Course</b> <b>Third Course</b> <b>Fourth Course</b> <b>Fifth Course</b>
<b>Monday 11/19</b>	<b>Tuesday 11/20</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mushroom ragout <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sauce gribiche <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Butternut squash puree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Produce aspic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Produce sweet potato/crème fraiche <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Butternut gaufrettes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Produce pheasant terrine <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Produce shrimp sausage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fried trumpet mushrooms, shellac	<b>Wednesday 11/21</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vegetable work: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut, blanch, roast brussels <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cook carrots <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cook and cut butternut squash <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Slice radishes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blanch baby radishes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Celeriac and apple <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Baby fennel <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initial coats	
<b>Thursday 11/22</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quail egg <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clean baby greens	<b>Friday 11/23</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Pack <input type="checkbox"/> Fly at 3:26 p.m.	<b>Saturday 11/24</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arrive in LUX at 8:00 a.m. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unpack and check product	
<b>Sunday 11/25</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Glazing <input type="checkbox"/> Leah picks up flowers	<b>Monday 11/26</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Display finished by 8:00 a.m.		



**k. The morning of your cold food competition:**

-Take a cart with you if possible or have your cooler and cases on wheels.

-Bring aspic with you to the arena in a small Thermos, along with small paint brushes. Heat the aspic to 105 before leaving your hotel so that it will be around the ideal temperature later when you need it.

-You never know what type of workspace will be provided, if any at all. A portable DJ table (purchased on amazon) can be a lifesaver and will prevent you from having to work with your materials on the floor.

-Plate in a refrigerated space if possible, such as a walk-in cooler.

-Bring duplicates of any items that you have with you to the competition, just in case there is an accident or unforeseen circumstance.

**-ABOVE ALL ELSE: Always be professional and courteous to the competitors around you.** If requested, help the people around you. Help people unload if necessary. The first part of being a professional chef is being professional; fellow competitors may not remember your hors d'oeuvres, but they will remember that you were a solid human being when they needed help from someone.



## **I. ACF Scoring**

Scoring gold is all about creating a tremendous first impression and a display that can withstand scrutiny; as a competitor, you want the judges to have a gold medal impression and work their way backwards as opposed to an impression that makes them add the score up from the bottom.

No matter how insignificant it may seem, every detail is important when a competitor is trying to attain a high score. From the presentation of the menu to the show plate, to the risers and tablecloth, every detail speaks to the competitor's commitment to excellence. Competition judges are human, and they have competed many times to reach the level of ACF approved competition judge... if a competitor does an outstanding job then most judges would be willing to overlook some small mistakes while still retaining a high score. Don't underestimate the importance of the overall presentation.

Cold food scoring is as follows:

**36-40** Gold

**32-35.99** Silver

**28-31.99** Bronze

The maximum amount of points which can be awarded for each criteria is as follows:

### **10 points- Presentation and general impression**

This is a crucial score. It is the impression that the judge has of the display the first time they approach the table.

### **5 points- Evenness of glazing**

Glazing is an essential skill that can keep an otherwise outstanding display from reaching a high score. When glazing, make sure meats and garnishes receive three coats, and all leafy greens receive one coat. Crackers and dry garnishes should receive several coats of food safe shellac. Be especially careful that the aspic on the back of terrines is even as well.

### **5 points- Use of various techniques**

The competitor should show various knife cuts, shapes and styles of crackers, and types of terrines in order to demonstrate their skill.

### **10 points- Exactness of skills displayed**

Slices must be the same width, and must have even spacing when laying them down in a row. Slices must be clean. Aspic work must be clean, without drips and coats must be even. Crackers shouldn't have bubbles, and should have even coats of shellac.

### **10 points- Knowledge of skills displayed**

The competitor obviously has a handle on the skills which are being displayed. Flavors make sense, proper cooking techniques have been demonstrated, proper glazing has been executed.

### **m. Additional Tips and Tricks for Cold Food Competition**

-Glazed items, except for sliced proteins and leafy greens, can be stored for a couple days in advance without negative side effects. They must be stored in an airtight container and always under refrigeration. Glazing ahead of time can lessen the workload right before the competition, allowing a competitor to pay more attention to detail and correct any mistakes that might be found.

-When setting a cold food display for a salon, it is imperative that your product is as fresh as possible. It is always preferable to arrange the plates or platter inside of a walk-in cooler if at all possible. Greens for the salad should be dipped as display is being set. If it is not possible to heat aspic at the site, heat aspic before leaving your kitchen and transport it in a thermos or otherwise highly insulated container. If using a Thermos, preheat the Thermos with boiling water and empty it before adding aspic. This will also remove any fats or pollutants that are in the interior of the Thermos before adding aspic.

-Proteins should always be brined so that they appear to be as fresh as possible and will resist oxidation as they sit out on display.

-Display plates should reflect how platter/hors d'oeuvres are laid out

-Use address labels for packing, color coded

-Hors d'oeuvres should be on risers

-Gelatin sheets: 7 ea.=1 oz. Powdered, use Silver Strength sheets

-Inject aspic into peas, currents, etc. using a hypodermic needle.

-Aspic should be added to blanching water whenever possible when cooking products which will be glazed.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions that you might have after this class, including photographs of entries for which you would like to receive an opinion or advice!

Scott Craig CEC,CCA,WCMC

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Instagram: @chefscottcraig

**n. Further Reference Material**

American Culinary Federation Professional Competition Manual

American Culinary Federation's Guide to Culinary Competitions: Cooking to Win by Edward Leonard, CMC

New Currents in American Cuisine: Cooking with Team USA

Additionally, my personal food blog, [www.ifyoucanstandtheheat.com](http://www.ifyoucanstandtheheat.com), has a link at the top of the page to hundreds of photos from the 2012 International Culinary Olympics

## **o. Glossary**

Aspic- A savory, clear jelly which is typically produced with animal stock.

Chemise- A thin layer of aspic which is applied to a food contact surface. A chemise should always be added to any silver-plated surface, as there can be a reaction when it comes in contact with acid from food products.

Chaud Froid (pronounced "sho frwah")- Literally from French: "Hot-Cold". This is typically a cream sauce that is set with gelatin and applied to the exterior of a product. Chaud Froid can be poured over a terrine, or allowed to cold set and then wrapped.



*The piece on the left is an example of a terrine wrapped with a chaud froid.*

Garnish (as it relates to cold food)- Garnishes are items that appear on a platter and should complement the meat pieces. There should be one garnish per meat piece, and a total of 8 portions of each garnish on a platter for each variety.



*This is a smoked pheasant and pistachio sausage with orange supreme on an herbed cracker, presented as a garnish to a BBQ spiced pheasant terrine.*

Glazing- The process of applying aspic to all of the items which are going to be presented in a cold food program.

Terrine- A meat, fish, poultry or vegetable preparation which has been cooked or otherwise prepared in advance, allowed to set, and is typically sliced and then served.

Wrap- A thin layer which is applied to the outside of a terrine which enhances the flavor and aesthetic of a terrine, and also aids in the retention of moisture.



*There are three differing wraps present on this platter; the right is a chaud froid, the center is a cured meat, the left is a puree that has been set with gelatin and has an inlay.*

[illegible]

[illegible]



**May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019**