

# GOING FOR THE GOLD

By Judith Kellogg, *Hawaii/Pacific Islands Chargée de Presse Provinciale*

MOST PEOPLE PRESENTED WITH A MYSTERY BASKET containing whole fresh snapper, shrimp, pork tenderloin, Ewa sweet onion, goat cheese, Okinawan sweet potato, and baby bok choy would not know what to do with it. However, seven talented young chefs did, each taking three hours to transform these ingredients into a three-course meal during the Hawaii/Pacific Islands regional Jeunes Commis competition on April 12 at the Culinary Institute of the Pacific at Kapiolani Community College.

Conseiller Culinaire Provinciale Kusuma Cooray, a professor at the Culinary Institute, masterfully organized the event. She was assisted by the U.S. Army Culinary Arts Team Hawaii, with special support from Staff Sergeant David Marcelli, aide to the commanding general of the U.S. Army Pacific, who served as kitchen judge. Former regional Jeunes Commis winner Jarren Otake also assisted.

The day began at 7:00 A.M., with contestants touring the kitchen, observing the well-stocked pantry, and receiving inspiration from Bailli Provincial Laurence Vogel. An hour later, they began designing their menus, spending thirty minutes planning, three hours cooking, and thirty minutes plating and cleaning up. As the competition wrapped up, envious spectators watched while the judges assessed the courses on taste, presentation, and originality.

This year's professional judges were Waikiki Sheraton Executive Chef Daniel Delbrel, Waialae Country Club Executive Chef/Kauai/Oahu Chef Rôtisseur Guido Ulmann, and Maui Bailli/Chef Rôtisseur Werner Boettner. "Civilian" gastronomes included Honolulu Vice Conseiller Gastronomique George Sumner, Kauai/Oahu Vice Echanson Maurice Nicholson, and Dame de la Chaîne Vivien Stackpole.

Afterward, the young chefs joined us for a celebratory luncheon at the Outrigger Canoe Club. With a contestant seated at each table, we got to know these energetic and interesting individuals. The winners were then announced. Bronze medals went to Adina Guest of the Culinary Institute of the Pacific; Keaka Lee of Russell Siu's; Tony Sanders of the Culinary Arts Team U.S. Army Pacific; Colin Sato of Alan Wong's; Daniel Umeno of the Halekulani; and Chris Watts of Ola at Turtle Bay.

The silver medal was bestowed upon Chef Rôtisseur Sonny Acosta of the Culinary Institute of the Pacific. His winning menu featured potato-crusting Tai snapper with seafood sausage on pear-tomato salad with bouillabaisse; pork tenderloin with sweet potato gratin and Ewa sweet onion marmalade; and goat cheese and grape Napoleon with red-wine coulis. Chef Acosta is a second-time regional winner, who is now setting his sights on the national gold. 🍷



**1** H/PI regional Jeunes Commis competitors. **2** Tony Sanders, Monique Sorrell-Johnson, Edmund Perez, Bailli Provincial Laurence Vogel, Clinton Francis III and floor judge Staff Sergeant David Marcelli. **3** Floor judge Staff Sergeant David Marcelli. **4** Kauai/Oahu Bailli Mark Monoscalco, H/PI regional Jeunes Commis competition winner Chef Rôtisseur Sonny Acosta and Chambellan Provincial Fred Hellekes. **5** H/PI regional Jeunes Commis competition winner Chef Rôtisseur Sonny Acosta.

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