

Chef Spotlight

Robert Stehlin
Executive Chef, ACC
Culinaire International



with
Laurie Dove
Texas
Meetings +
Events

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After experiencing some of the most impressive convention center cuisine we've ever encountered, Texas Meetings + Events sat down with Executive Chef Robert Stehlin of Culinaire International, who has been serving fine fare at the Arlington Convention Center for more than 14 years.

Catering for large groups isn't normally thought of as leading-edge cuisine.

Our philosophy on cooking at the ACC is to cook with as many fresh ingredients as possible. Our kitchen is 90 percent from scratch. We make our own sauces, vinaigrettes and use only fresh chicken and beef. We also use small amounts of expensive ingredients such as truffle oil, saffron, fresh microgreens, exotic fruits and heirloom tomatoes.

How has the Arlington Convention Center set itself apart, in terms of catering? How will it continue to do so?

We have a very dedicated and longterm staff with a commitment to personal service. Their years of experience and consistent efforts to always seek new and innovative menu items are a major asset. For example, we are often a less expensive alternative to hotels and competing convention centers, while still providing innovative items like our gourmet popcorn station. Plain popcorn is made exciting by tossing it with dill truffle oil, jalapeño cheddar butter, bacon blue cheese butter or cinnamon and sugar. Then it is served from vintage popcorn carts at an action station.

What's the best food you've ever eaten (prepared by the ACC's catering staff, of course)?

We recently hosted a baseball themed event. The client was looking for something fun that fit the theme but that was still upscale. I created a lobster corn dog served with a whole grain mustard hollandaise and filet mignon. It was really exceptional and the guests loved it too.

Chef Robert's Famous

~ BREAD ~ PUDDING

9x11 cake dish
6 Croissants, 1 Loaf French Bread or Brioche

} Cut into 2x2 cubes – enough to fill cake dish

CUSTARD: 1 quart heavy cream, 12 whole eggs
1 cup sugar, 2 tsp vanilla, 1 tsp cinnamon

Mix eggs and sugar together until smooth.
Add cream, vanilla and cinnamon – combine well.

STREUSEL TOPPING: 1 stick butter, ½ cup flour,
½ cup brown sugar – cut butter into flour and brown sugar mixture until crumbly.

DIRECTIONS: Let the bread dry uncovered on a sheet pan for one day. Butter the cake dish and place the bread evenly in the cake dish. Cover the bread with mixed custard. Let the pudding sit for one hour in the refrigerator. Cover the pudding with foil and place in the middle of an oven that has been preheated to 350 degrees. Bake for 45 minutes. Uncover, sprinkle the streusel topping on top and bake uncovered for an additional 15 minutes.

CRÈME ANGLAISE: 12 egg yolks, 1 cup sugar,
1 quart heavy cream, beans from 1 vanilla bean

Heat the cream and vanilla bean to a soft boil. While the cream is heating, whip the sugar and eggs together on medium speed until well combined and fluffy. When the cream is at a soft boil, gradually stir half of the cream mixture into the sugar and egg mixture. Once the sugar and egg mixture is tempered, combine it with the remaining cream mixture. Return to the stove and stir constantly over medium heat until it coats the back of a wood spoon and you can draw a line in the crème and it stays. Place the crème anglaise in the refrigerator until cool. Pour over warm bread pudding and serve immediately. ~

