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INDUSTRY NEWS



American Culinary Federation
Chefs and Culinary
Professionals of Chicagoland

ACF Chefs and Culinary Professionals of Chicagoland, founded in 2003, is one of the fastest-growing chapters of the American Culinary Federation (ACF). Click [here](#) for more information.

Oktoberfest and Birthday Wishes

Over the years, Oktoberfest has held a special feeling for me. No, it is not the crisp, malty amber lager drank by the liter! Yes, that is fun, but it's more about my first experience really getting something for my birthday that was over the top. It became a story I tell year after year. It was being dragged to Munich on my birthday in the back of the chef's car to experience Oktoberfest as best we could. Just thinking about it makes me smile about this act of hospitality.

Growing up, you have big dreams of getting that birthday gift-you know the one. "Mom, I really, really want it! Pleeeeeeaaase!" But undoubtedly you never got it. However, after I left home in my early 20s and went to see the world via long hours and the underpaid avenue of a cook looking for a European stage, I found a home for a while in Switzerland and did my best to survive the language, the work, and the inevitable pressure of being the low man on the stick. For American chefs trying to become something in Europe in the late '80s, there was a bit of challenge to say the least.

I had only been there a couple of months, and that time was spent getting to know my co-workers, usually over late-night beers. We had no money, but we talked about things we wanted to do while we were working in Europe. I think that after a couple of Stiefels, I expressed my desire to see Oktoberfest at least once in my life, but that was resigned to just dream. I knew I didn't even have enough money to pay for the "boots" sitting on the table. Luckily, they had a side door, and I made it out safe. I still owe them for the beer. I'm good!

Back to the story-next thing I know, it was my birthday and I was working the double. At the end of my shift at midnight, there was a beer in my hand as I took a ride on the street. 48 hours later, I was enjoying a liter for breakfast, roasted schweinshaxe, "The Radish Girls," the company of other Americans, sleeping in the trunk, waking up on the street, the "free" hotel breakfast, more beer and one "last one" before the drive back. I had my birthday wish come true! I am proud of the fact that I made it to work the next day at 3AM to make the croissants!

Trib Food

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The Cicerone Certification Program certifies and educates beer professionals in order to elevate the beer experience for



I am continually blown away by the generosity of my friends who dragged me away. Why they did it is their story, but it is something that has helped me define hospitality. We cook, cater and provide service, and we generally get lost in the logistics and chaos of getting things done. The fact that Bart and Brendan actually heard my request through the noise is exactly what hospitality is all about. Our job is not just serving food but understanding our customers and really listening to find out what is important to them. Hospitality is delivering on that promise. We need to know our customers, do the little things right and perfect the details-all while creating something extra that will surprise them. It's that old adage "exceed expectations." For me, I was content to have another birthday at an Irish-themed Swiss restaurant, but what a surprise I got.

I have learned from that, and so can you-do the unexpected without asking and be the definition of hospitality.

PS: We found out later that we ended up with a whole bunch of parking tickets from the Munich police department, and the chef took care of it. Thanks, Reto!

- Chef John Reed, CEC, CCA

BEER

Try a Stiefel



consumers. cicerone.org.

PS: Pass it around, but don't put it down
or you'll have to wash it down.

Fill it with a Smoked Märzen



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