

Front Burner

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Raw deal San Diego—Preserving vintage cookbooks, dining on raw food, corralling restaurant customers—the old, the new, and the what-to-do—were all hot topics at the 24th annual International Association of Culinary Professionals (IACP) conference held in San Diego in April. More than 1,400 attendees, including a sizable overseas contingent, flocked to seminars, workshops, networking receptions, and gala soirees, leavening weighty discussions about our endangered environment with shop talk about succeeding as a personal chef, the nuances of single-origin coffee, and the distinctive varieties of California almonds.

A bevy of notable chefs made appearances at the podium: **Rick Bayless** (Frontera Grill and Topolobampo, Chicago) and **Richard Sandoval** (Maya, NYC and San Francisco) provided insight into the heritage of Hispanic cheeses; **Cory Schreiber** (Wildwood, Portland,

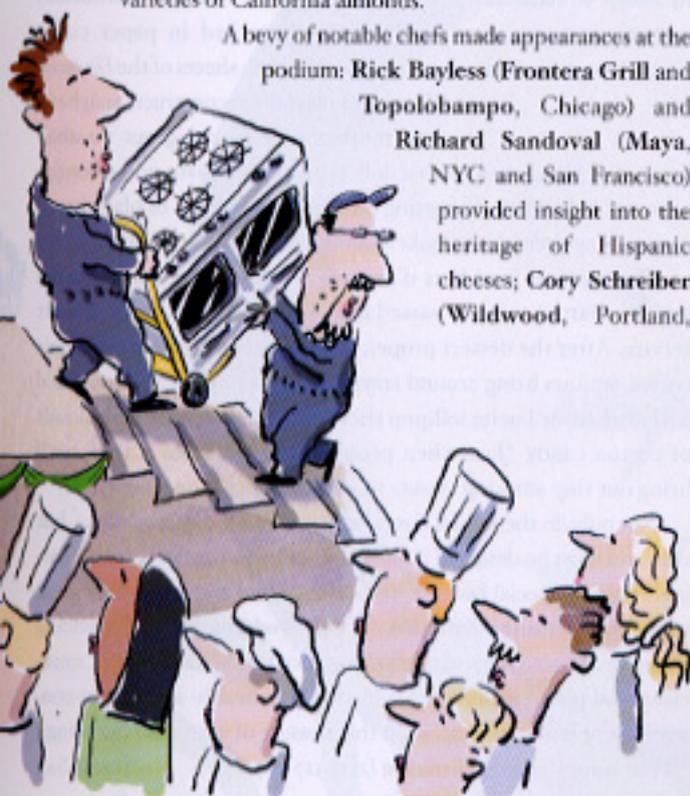
OR) urged sustainability inside the restaurant; **Jacques Pépin** demonstrated nine salmon dishes; and **Mai Pham** (Lemon Grass, Sacramento) introduced participants to the pleasures of the Southern Vietnamese table, showing, for example, how to make rice paper wrappers to enrobe such delectable stuffings as shrimp and wood ear mushrooms.

A handful of early bird registrants garnered places for a nine course all-raw, *über* vegetarian meal prepared, but evangelically uncooked, by **Charlie Trotter** and **Roxanne Klein**, whose namesake restaurant in Larkspur, California, specializes in unalloyed organic dishes devoid of meat, grains, or dairy products.

At a morning-after session in a jam-packed ballroom, Trotter and Klein elaborated on their celebration of the vegetable. "While we're interested in health," Trotter explained, "it's the explosive flavor, texture, and sensuality of the ingredients that are most attractive." His layered *parvé* of thinly sliced portobello mushrooms in a marinade of soy sauce, lemon juice, ginger, garlic, shallots, and cilantro, passed around for a tasting, proved his point. Klein described her tools and techniques—vegetable slicers, high-speed blenders, dehydrators, and a hydraulic press that breaks down cellular structure to achieve a more intensely flavored juice. Her kitchen wizardry includes "cheese" made of cashew nut paste, "couscous" composed of tiny bits of green cauliflower, and shredded coconut "noodles" for *pad Thai*.

Fresh vegetables and fruits, along with California pan roasted quail, also starred at a dinner, which kicked off a new IACP project to help libraries preserve historically significant cookbooks.

While culinary historians rallied to save books, restaurateurs focused on preserving their own establishments. "Butts in Seats" (drawing on a favorite phrase of the legendary restaurateur Joe Baum), a lively session organized by Andrew Freeman, vice president for restaurant sales and marketing of the Kimpton Group, with two public relations cohorts, Tamara Wilson from Seattle and



terrace level of the Trump Tower. Gone also is Si, Si, the pair's more formal Latin restaurant on the same floor, which opened in March and lasted only slightly longer. • Just shy of her one year anniversary, Zarela Martínez pulled the plug on *Danzón*, her tribute to regional Veracruz cuisine. "It was the next step forward for Mexican food," Martínez says, "but a so-so review in the *New York Times* right after 9/11 killed us." She contemplated tinkering with the format, but in the end Martínez said she just ran out of money. • Dante Boccuzzi has returned to *Aureole*, where he began his career more than 10 years ago, to replace **Gerry Hayden**, who plans to open his own restaurant. In the

ensuing years, he's built a stellar résumé working in San Francisco at *Silks Restaurant* in the *Mandarin Oriental Hotel*, and most recently in Europe at *Nobu Milan*. Boccuzzi is also a musician and is looking to start up an all-chef band, similar to the one he formed in San Francisco (they were named the *Back Burner Blues Band*). He's still seeking band mates, but *Café Boulud's* **Andrew Carmellini**, who plays lead guitar, has made the cut. They're thinking of calling themselves *Black Angus*. • *Tocqueville* chef/owner **Marco Moreira** and gm/owner **Jo-Ann Makovitzky** are the proud parents of their first baby, *Francesca*, born May 30.

BOSTON—Rumors swirled for months that *Lydia*

Shire was closing *Liba*, and indeed the doors were locked in June. But after renovations, overseen by designer **Adam Tibbany**, *Shire* will usher in a new modern American restaurant in November. She's partnered with **Ken Himmel** and **Timothy Lynch** (*Grill 23 and Harvest*) for the yet-to-be-named restaurant. • *UpStairs* at the *Padding* gets **Mary-Catherine Deibel** and **Deborah Hughes** have been displaced since June 2001, when Harvard University reclaimed the building that housed their restaurant. But they've found a new home in Cambridge at the corner of *JFK and Winthrop St.* on *Winthrop Square*. They're shooting for an October debut of newly named *UpStairs on the*