

## Guest Chefs At Legends Get Ready For Super Challenge

■ Tribal member Manuel Diaz gets to play "The Apprentice" role.

By Peta Tinda

Three guest chefs were at Spirit Mountain Casino to help with the Casino's entry into the 2004 Culinary Super Challenge, a national cooking competition held in Florida, with a top prize of \$12,000.

The contest was postponed due to the recent hurricanes in the Sunshine State, but was re-scheduled for late October.



**Craftsmen** — Guest Chef Shawn Hanlin, (right) helps Spirit Mountain Casino Executive Chef Toby TenEyck with the Casino's entry in the 2005 Culinary Super Challenge, a national contest that encourages chefs to develop new recipes in hopes of winning.

Richard Burr, John Fisher and Shawn Hanlin cook for such prestigious Portland establishments as Holladay Park plaza and the downtown Portland Hilton.

This year the team's entry into the culinary challenge is a riverboat themed meal, using Pacific North-

west ingredients.

Burr, who was on the 2000 National Culinary Team, said he thought their chances at the Super Challenge were good.

"We've got a little experience," he said with grin. "We can shake the pans."

"We try to focus on using ingredients from the area," said Burr, shucking fresh Kumamoto oysters for the first course of the meal.

"It's great of Spirit Mountain Casino to sponsor us and be supportive of having the chefs better themselves," said Burr. "It's a great opportunity to learn for all of us and the chefs who work here."

Burr said that the key to fine cuisine was using only the finest ingredients.

"We buy the best ingredients we can, fresh seafood — the best possible ingredients."

The team also included Casino Executive Chef Toby TenEyck and Tribal member Manuel Diaz, who recently moved from Arizona and attended the Cordon Bleu Culinary Academy in Portland.

Diaz, the son of Deanna and Manuel Diaz, lives in Willamina and said that he always wanted to be a chef.

"I always used to help my mom around the kitchen," said Diaz, opening a box of

fresh sage for the turkey tureen he and the other chefs were making for the competition.

At the academy, Diaz took a 13-month crash course in everything from baking, confectionary, sauté, food safety, wine and spirits, management, marketing and everything

one needs to know to work in a high-end restaurant.

He also took the introductory Sommelier course which taught him about wine and what wine goes with what dish.

Diaz, 21, attended the Academy right out of high school. An apprentice chef for 4 years, says the job challenges him to be creative and pay close attention to detail.

He works as a line chef at the Legends Restaurant and says he takes great pride in the quality of the food that he and the other Legends' chefs produce.

"Everybody works hard," he said. "Everybody makes everybody else look good with the quality of the food that goes out, how it looks, how it tastes. There's a sense of pride that goes into everything we do — that every plate has to look good."

The chefs have to use ingredients provided by the Super Challenge's sponsors, namely Jennie-O turkeys, Land o' Lakes butter, McIlhenny tabasco sauce and Florida Beef Council beef.

To that end, the chefs have to prepare a three-star meal using the specified ingredients.

The flat iron steaks are made with choice cuts of beef, the paté with Jennie-O turkey, the Tabasco flavors the breading on the flat irons, and liberal amounts of Land o' Lakes butter are used throughout.

"We decided to do the paté because it's a challenged to make something that's cost-effective, like turkey, and something that's really elegant, like paté," said Fisher.

How exactly do you make pate?

It's really easy, said Fisher. First you take some fresh turkey livers, add a little cognac, dust them with paprika, sauté until rare on both sides, add some pork fatback, throw in some fresh spices, say, a little thyme, marjoram, sage, shallots, a



**The Apprentice** — Tribal member Manuel Diaz, 21, is a chef at casino. Diaz attended the Cordon Bleu Academy in Portland and is one of the chefs competing in the contest.

couple garlic cloves and some port wine, and then sprinkle with some green peppercorns, and voila!

"...You have a really nice paté that goes well with the micro greens salad with gooseberry dressing and the compote we've made with high-mountain plums...very tasty."

Okay, so not exactly easy, but worth the effort, Fisher asserted.

TenEyck, said the Challenge was a great opportunity for the Legends Chefs to work with top quality chefs.

"The chef's skill level is very high," he said.

TenEyck said that he encouraged the Legends' chefs to be creative in developing their own recipes.

"The goal is that all of the courses are stand-outs," he said.

"Also we're providing a top-notch dining experience and providing a training opportunity for our staff."

At Legends, TenEyck said, "You can always expect a quality dining experience at a reasonable price. I think we'll do really well." ■

## Lodge Expansion Completion Set For Spring Of Next Year

■ Tribal construction crew just finished the last of the 15 concrete pours.

By Peta Tinda

Construction on Spirit Mountain Casino's Lodge expansion is on schedule, with an expected opening date of sometime in late March or early April of 2005.

Workers from Howard S. Wright Construction and the Grand Ronde Tribal Construction Crew have finished the last of 15 concrete pours. Over 5,000 cubic yards of concrete was used to build the new expansion.

"It's as solid a structure as I've seen," said Construction Manager Dan Armstrong. "Two months ago, there was nothing here, now were transitioning to the finishing phase. That's the beauty of it."

The building has what's called post-tension concrete construction, a method of reinforcing concrete with high-strength steel cables, known as tendons.

The cables are run inside the concrete slabs when they are first poured, then tightened with hydraulic presses, making them very



rigid and counteracting the natural tendency of the slabs to sag in the middle.

This makes the structure very strong without the need of heavy concrete beams.

Some of the other benefits of this construction method are shrinkage and crack control, faster construction and less concrete is needed.

The new lodge expansion will also be very safe, with everything built of non-combustible materials and up to the latest building code standards. It has a total of nine heavy shear walls which brace the building against wind and seismic loads.

These walls are anchored to pilings driven 30 feet into the ground.

The exterior cladding, complete with casino colors already painted, has begun to be added, and is expected to be complete within 30-45 days. After the cladding is applied, work will begin on the interior.

In the meantime, a model room will be on display to show guests what the new Lodge accommodations will look like.

The expansion will house 163 rooms with the top floor home to 13 double-room suites.

There are also plans in the works for a swimming pool and activity center to be built on to the southwest side of the casino in 2005.

After the pool is in, a 30,000 square-foot conference center will be built adjacent to the pool.

Spirit Mountain Casino Facility Services Manager Ron Sabatini says that these numbers are preliminary, but give a good idea of some of the projects that Spirit Mountain has planned in the near future.