

WINNING RECIPES

The top chefs at the Antigua Charter Yacht Show's Culinary Contest tell Sophia Wilson how they keep their customers satisfied



With requests ranging from peeled walnuts and perfectly cubed cucumbers to baby octopus and fried offal at 4am, charter guests are arguably the most demanding diners in the world. Superyacht chefs are expected to switch effortlessly between Michelin-star-standard fine dining and guilty-pleasure burgers, all the while sourcing ingredients in far-flung destinations.

The chameleon-like cooking abilities of some of the industry's top chefs were put to the test at the 2018 Annual Chef's Culinary Contest at the Antigua Charter Yacht Show on 4-9 December. Sponsored by Boat International Media and Kennedy's Club, chefs were challenged to produce a New Year's Eve-themed dinner party in 30 minutes to match fictional charter guests' requirements. Each of the three boat size categories received a preference sheet that had been created by charter brokers to stretch the 27 competing chefs.

In a world where guests are becoming increasingly food savvy and dietary restrictions are prolific, how do you keep everyone on board happy? We spoke to the 2018 winners to find out...

Winner
160ft (48m)
and over



THE FOCUSED MAVERICK

Peter "Frosty" Frost
Eternity - 64.92m
Burgess

After earning his stripes at the three-Michelin-starred Waterside Inn in Berkshire, UK, Peter Frost's culinary career has taken him around the world - from a members' club in Bahrain to a private island in Panama. The London-raised chef, who has worked under the likes of Tom Aikens, Gordon Ramsay and Pierre Koffmann, drew from his experience to fulfil the requirements for a multigenerational charter that needed to balance a preference for healthy cuisine with canapés and a decadent chocolate pudding. His creations included an American Black Angus beef fillet main course served with beef cheek and paté, and a Ferrero Rocher dessert.



Peter Frost's prize-winning beef fillet main course, above, and salmon Scotch egg with caviar, left



The idea was to celebrate beef. Not just the expensive cuts but also elevate the humble parts as well. I like to be elegant but a bit playful with it.

I wanted to give a little bit of myself to the meal. Most UK homes have Ferrero Rocher over Christmas and New Year so I wanted to bring a tongue-in-cheek take on that to the table.

Artistry on the plate is important. You are trying to tell a story with your food. I like to create a journey so I look at what the animal eats and incorporate those ingredients into the dish as well.

I'm a little bit of a workaholic. I like to be super organised. I am up at four or five most days and finish at 10 or 11. But I really enjoy what I do, so I just carry on until the jobs are done.

I try to eat out locally wherever the boat is and at my favourite places. When I am on leave I do stages [unpaid internships] to keep up with modern trends, ideas and presentation.

Winner
126ft to 159ft
(38m to 48m)



THE PASSIONATE REBEL

Sebastian Springer

Harle – 44.5m

Northrop & Johnson

After embarking on a career in marketing management, Sebastian Springer performed a U-turn and, against his father's wishes, followed in his footsteps as a chef. Having spent nearly a decade on superyachts, the German-South African chef had to fulfil a brief for a 1920s-inspired coeliac-friendly dinner party. Highlights of his meal included an amuse-bouche of seared scallops with kimchi, and a K2 beef fillet served with a peppered glaze and truffle.

This win is for my father. He always wanted me to “work with my head rather than my hands” but I went into cookery anyway. He passed away when I was 23 so this one is kind of for him – even if it is just to stick it to him!

I had two cameras set up so that I could watch the judges from an iPad in the galley while I was working.

I was trying to beat the clock the whole time. I had a pre-set starter and dessert which just needed final touches, so I got to concentrate on the K2 fillet, which was the main presentation.

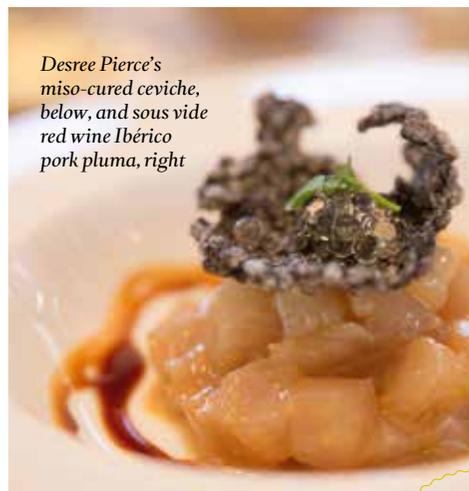
I have never considered food a competition. To me it is like art or music: how do you judge someone to be better than someone else?

The world is getting healthier. The approach of “butter, butter and more butter” is dead. If you eat fresh and healthy you live longer. This is especially relevant when you are cooking for the wealthy, who, of course, want to live life to the fullest.

It was a shock when I first started working on yachts because at a restaurant you get to write the menu and essentially tell people what they want to eat. But when you are on board you have to make what is asked – from pizza at 4am to the finest food possible.



Sebastian Springer's amuse-bouche of seared scallop with kimchi, below, and multiple-element Chocolate Decadence pudding, left



Desree Pierce's miso-cured ceviche, below, and sous vide red wine Ibérico pork pluma, right

Winner
125ft (38m)
and under



THE BOHEMIAN CREATIVE

Desree Pierce

Joy – 23.47m

Blue Latitude Yachting/Simpson Marine

After being lured from her studies as a fashion designer by the joy of cooking, Desree Pierce set sail from her native Cape Town just over four years ago. Now most at home in the new galley of this recently launched multihull, she impressed the judges with a creative twist on a demanding brief that requested a traditional Austrian family evening. Her menu featured miso-cured ceviche, sous vide red wine Ibérico pork pluma and vegan piña colada cheesecake.

I looked at the preference sheet and tried to read into the basics of what the judges were looking for. They wanted flavour, they wanted something that they were familiar with but they are in an exotic area. So I tried to pick out elements but give them something exciting.

So many people are foodies these days, it's really hard to impress. If I can find meals that really have that wow factor for my guests, then I am stoked.

There is a trend for healthier food these days, but that doesn't have to mean the food has to be bland. It can be really tasty; it's all about how you combine your different flavours and use fresh ingredients.

To be out on the ocean and be free to travel, taste different cuisines and learn from other people is a dream come true.

I travel to eat and taste more. My partner and I spent a year in Asia, going to all the food stores and chatting to locals. I love bringing Asian fusion into my food. ■