

6TH ANNUAL INVITATIONAL LEADERSHIP FORUM

Flavor Quality & American Menus Leadership Forums



UC DAVIS

Envisioning the Future and Stimulating Dialogue
Among Chefs, American Foodservice
and U.S. Agriculture

September 9–12, 2009



“Outstanding! Excellent experience.” “I rarely rank events with such complete excellent scores—this was a superb conference!” “This program far exceeded my expectations.” “Speakers were unbelievable!” “Fabulous experience. Thank you!” “You hit a home run with this conference.”

—Comments from corporate chefs, operators and other attendees at previous Flavor, Quality & American Menus Leadership Forums

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

In years past, American farmers produced the nation’s food (and envisioned feeding the world), food processors innovated within a narrow range of expectations, professional chefs and home cooks made few demands on producers, and food and flavor trends were slow to emerge. Wine was at most a tangential player at the American table.

Today, commodity agriculture in the West and much of the United States is under pressure as Latin America, China and other Asian countries bring more and more production on-line. Chefs, culinary product developers, cookbook authors and other culinary experts are firing up consumer interest in international flavors, and changing demographics are accelerating this trend. The options for growing, processing and marketing agricultural products are now vast and global, while clarity about best options is often muddled by a competitive marketplace sending mixed signals.

Wine is now welcome at the American table, and the California wine industry (along with the rest of the U.S. wine industry) – helped by positive findings on wine consumption and health – has flourished. Now, however, American wine producers face new challenges from other countries, and a shifting landscape of flavors and menu directions that appears to be less wine friendly.

Clearly, for those who value quality and diversity in food, wine and the culinary arts and those invested in the success of American agriculture and value-added processing, now is the time to be working closely together. This is the impetus behind the partnership





between The Culinary Institute of America (CIA), a world leader in professional culinary arts education, and University of California at Davis, a world leader in agricultural, food science, viticultural, and enological education and research.

“**Flavor, Quality & American Menus,**” an annual invitational leadership retreat, and the online journal that inspires, “**American Menus & U.S. Agriculture,**” provides a venue for networking, information- and idea-sharing, and advancing both American agriculture and the food and wine industries that depend on it.

Working in partnership, The Culinary Institute of America—through its Napa Valley, California Greystone campus—and the UC Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences hope to unite leaders in agriculture, food processing and the culinary arts around a common mission, one that values scientific and technical excellence on the one hand and artistic and aesthetic accomplishment on the other.

This project was successfully inaugurated with our first annual leadership retreat jointly hosted by and located at the CIA at Greystone (Napa Valley) and UC Davis September 12-15, 2004. We continued to build on the success of this first gathering with retreats in 2005 through 2008.

Our **Sixth Annual Flavor, Quality & American Menus Leadership Forum** will continue the tradition September 9-12, 2009 as we welcome, on an invitation-only basis, 30-35 of our nation’s most influential chefs and foodservice industry leaders (with an emphasis on multi-unit and volume foodservice operations: chain restaurants, contract and volume foodservice, hotels and resorts, major college and university foodservice operations, and supermarket foodservice). They will be joined by leaders in U.S agriculture, food processing and manufacturing, wine and distribution—as well as key media, representing both trade and consumer sectors.



OBJECTIVES

What we hope to accomplish over the years through these efforts may be summarized as follows:

1. Stimulate new thinking about the **future of U.S. agriculture** that:
 - Addresses the need to develop new directions in agriculture, food processing, and viticulture and winemaking—directions that emphasize quality and diversity and increased opportunities for specialty, higher-margin agriculture;
 - Takes advantage of a growing consumer willingness to spend money for quality and in the pursuit of culinary adventure;
 - Anticipates changing American demographics and related taste preferences, and the impact that these changes will have on agriculture, food processing and the wine industry;
 - Welcomes the contributions of America’s new ethnic and immigrant farmers, and the new flavors that they bring to the American table; and
 - Looks for solutions to balance and integrate consumers’ growing interest in environmental sustainability with the economic needs and realities of the farm community.
2. Create an **annual forum on menu development** for the foodservice industry that approaches menu R & D from the perspective of flavor, quality and diversity in U.S. agriculture, food processing, viticulture and enology.
3. **Accelerate health and wellness initiatives within the foodservice industry** through exploring the opportunities for ingredient and supply chain innovation as well as supplier-driven menu development support that focuses on delivering higher standards of flavor and greater flavor diversity.



4. **Build bridges among leaders in U.S. agriculture, food processing, wine, distribution and chefs and other foodservice leaders** (with an emphasis on multi-unit and volume foodservice operations), and as a result, enhance loyalty towards U.S. agriculture).
5. **Showcase leaders and innovators** whose successes confirm the viability of a commitment to quality, flavor and diversity.
6. Grow and develop **an online journal of information, ideas and culinary trend analysis** at www.ciaprochef.com that supports these objectives and captures the best of the annual forum.
7. **Expand collaboration between The Culinary Institute of America and the UC Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences** to benefit students of both institutions and thereby advance the fields of the culinary arts, foodservice management, agriculture and food and wine science and technology.

PROJECT INFORMATION

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