



❖ FEATURE Expo



On with the Show

International Pizza Expo 2010 draws near record crowd

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In early March of this year, the Las Vegas Convention Center was abuzz with the 26th annual International Pizza Expo. The industry's oldest, largest and most respected trade show took place March 2-4 with nearly 1,000 exhibitors and 6,067 attendees.

Pizzeria operators from around the world gathered for the show, which

offered 70 educational seminars, two keynote addresses, the World Pizza Games, the Rockin' Party, a \$20,000 MEGABUCKS giveaway and the International Pizza Challenge.

Bill Oakley, senior vice president of Macfadden Protech LLC, the parent company of *Pizza Today* and Pizza Expo, says the show had a little something for everyone.

"We pulled out all the stops to make sure International Pizza Expo was the biggest and best show ever," says Oak-

ley. "We expanded our educational program to include more than 70 business-boosting seminars and demonstrations. We also added several new industry speakers who addressed the hot issues facing pizzeria operators today."

Those seminars, says Oakley, are a major reason pizzeria owners attend International Pizza Expo year in and year out. Then there's the competitive side of the show, another draw.

"Our competitions continue to grow in popularity," says Oakley. "Pizzeria

operators are proud of their pizza, and the International Pizza Challenge gives them a platform to show their peers what they can do.”

Chef Theo Kalogeracos, who has pizza operations in both Australia and Indonesia, claimed first in the non-traditional category of the International Pizza Challenge this year. He then took the win in the ensuing blind-box competition, which pits the top two finishers in both the traditional and non-traditional categories against one another in a timed contest that requires the competitors to work from a pre-determined list of ingredients. Additionally, each competitor was required to use a secret ingredient — this year’s must-have was grilled chicken.

“I went with a ‘simple is better’ approach in the blind-box (competition),” says Kalogeracos, who won a total of \$15,000 between the two challenges. “Chicken and pesto work well together. And thought it’s simple, it’s also very flavorful. We’re working quickly, so I had to make a fast decision and go with it. Thankfully, it worked out to my advantage.”

In another form of competitive expression, the World Pizza Games continued its fast-paced, high-energy assault on International Pizza Expo crowds again this year. A batch of fresh new faces popped onto the scene at the show, led by Eric Corbin of Grimaldi’s in Tucson, Arizona. Corbin finished first in the “Largest Dough” category and tied for first (with Jay Schuurman of Hookah Bar & Grill in Salt Lake City, Utah) in the Freestyle Master’s Division.

“It’s very exciting, a little overwhelming,” says Corbin, who was mentored into the competition by co-worker Jamie Culliton, a longtime World Pizza Games competitor.

Back on the show floor, Expo attendees were equally overwhelmed with the amount of products and services available. First-time attendee Richard Gray, manager of Garbanzos Pizza in New Plymouth, Idaho, says his store will greatly benefit from his trip to International Pizza Expo 2010.

“We’re just here to take in all the information and maybe make our little restaurant a little better place to be,” he said from the show floor on March 3. “We’re just amazed at all the information we’ve gleaned from this Expo. It’s fabulous.”

Gray was far from the only first-time attendee at Expo, says Oakley.

“This year I was just blown away by the number of first-time attendees, new exhibitors — we had 95 new companies this year — and the overall size of the show,” Oakley says. “I’ve been producing Pizza Expo since 1994, and I think this is by far the best show we’ve ever produced in terms of our educational program, which I think is second to none, demonstrations, networking events, contests and the overall depth and quality of exhibits.

“Pizza Expo is truly the ‘Show of Shows’. In fact, word has it Pizza Expo is now one of the Top 200 shows according to *Trade-show Week* magazine, which would be quite an honor. The bottom line is if you’re looking for a product or service for your pizzeria or just an answer to your problem, you’ll find it at Pizza Expo. Everything you need for your pizzeria and more, all under one roof at a single location.”

Next year’s show is scheduled for March 1-3 at the Las Vegas Convention Center. For more information, visit www.pizzaexpo.com. ❖

International Pizza Challenge Scores

Traditional Division, Top 3

1. Eddy Rossignoli, Pizzeria Brian, Venezia, Italy 107.35
2. Jane Mines, Nima’s Pizza & More, Gassville, AR 102.9
3. Gianluca Procaccini, Pizzeria Il Campione, Lido De Ostia, Italy 99.45

Non-Traditional Division, Top 3

1. Theo Kalogeracos, Pizza Boutique, Jakarta, Indonesia 136.4
2. Abe Collins, Goodfella’s Café, Staten Island, NY 132.55
3. John Gutekanst, Avalanche Pizza, Athens, OH 132.15

World Pizza Games Scores

Fastest Box Folding

1. Justin Stokes, Sparky’s Pizza, Urbana, OH :19.17
2. Casey Cole, A Slice of New York, Columbus, OH :22.74
3. David Sommers, Mad Mushroom Pizza, West Lafayette, IN :25.26

Fastest Dough

1. Domenico Sposeto, Italy :45.04
2. David Sommers, Mad Mushroom Pizza, West Lafayette, IN :47.40
3. Jamie Culliton, Grimaldi’s, Tucson, AZ :47.83

Largest Dough

1. Eric Corbin, Grimaldi’s, Tucson, AZ 93.25
2. Pat Miller, A Slice of New York, Columbus, OH 91.75
3. Spencer Glenn, Pizza My Heart, Monterey, CA 87.25

Longest Spin

1. Kazuya Akaogi, Japan 4:18.40
2. Casey Cole, A Slice of New York, Columbus, OH 2:46.40
3. David Sommers, Mad Mushroom Pizza, West Lafayette, IN 2:36.34

Freestyle First Division

1. Eric Corbin, Grimaldi’s, Tucson, AZ 178
2. Pat Miller, A Slice of New York, Columbus, OH 174
3. Ryan LaRose, A Slice of New York, Columbus, OH 161

Master’s Divisions

1. Jay Schuurman, Hookah Bar & Grill, Salt Lake City, UT 189.5
1. Eric Corbin, Grimaldi’s, Tucson, AZ 189.5
3. Justin Wadstein, Kianti’s Pizza & Pasta Bar, Santa Cruz, CA 179.5