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From left, Brent Herrig, Justin Fox Burks, Galdones Photography, Heather Anne Thomas

Contestants in the Cabin Pressure Cook-Off will be, from left, Hugh Acheson, of Empire State South in Atlanta; Kelly English, of Restaurant Iris in Memphis; George Mendes, of Aldea in New York; and Linton Hopkins, of Restaurant Eugene in Atlanta.

## ADVERTISING

### A Cook-Off Among Chefs to Join Delta's Kitchen

By JANE L. LEVERE

**D**ELTA AIR LINES and Food & Wine have joined forces to create a cooking contest to identify the next chef on Delta's culinary team.

The contest, which will be called the Cabin Pressure Cook-Off, will be announced on Monday and will feature four chefs cited in Food & Wine's annual best new chefs program. They will compete in three challenges that will be filmed in New York in late July and early August, and distributed this fall by Delta and Food & Wine on their Web sites and social media channels.

Henry Hartevelde, an analyst for Hudson Crossing, a travel consulting company, said it was not a coincidence that Delta and Food & Wine were collaborating, since Food & Wine is published by American Express Publishing, a subsidiary of the credit card company.

American Express and Delta have offered credit cards with both brands since 1996, and now offer four cards together, making American Express one of Delta's "key strategic business partners," Mr. Hartevelde said. American Express is the only credit card company Delta collaborates with on marketing activities in the United States. It also works with American Express overseas, and with Visa and MasterCard.

The new contest will feature Hugh Acheson, chef of Empire State South in Atlanta and 5 & 10 and the National in Athens, Ga.; Linton Hopkins, of Restaurant Eugene and Holeman & Finch Public House in Atlanta; Kelly English, of Restaurant Iris and the Second Line in Memphis and

Kelly English Steakhouse in St. Louis; and George Mendes, of Aldea in New York. Mr. Acheson was named one of Food & Wine's "best new chefs" in 2002, Mr. Mendes in 2011, and Mr. Hopkins and Mr. English in 2009.

The challenges will be filmed as three episodes, while a fourth episode will feature the winning chef visiting Delta's test kitchen in Atlanta. The winning chef will join Delta's culinary team: Michelle Bernstein of Michy's in Miami; Michael Chiarello of Bottega in Napa Valley and Coqueta in

*Four of Food & Wine's 'best new chefs' will compete in three challenges.*

San Francisco; and Andrea Robinson, a master sommelier. The three help Delta create food and wine offerings for long-haul business-class passengers on select routes, like transcontinental flights and service to Latin America and Japan. Joanne Smith, Delta's senior vice president for in-flight service, said the winning chef could design menus for business-class passengers on transatlantic flights.

The cook-off is not the first collaboration between Food & Wine and Delta. In addition to buying advertising space in Food & Wine for the last decade, Delta has sponsored the magazine's Food & Wine Classic annual food festival in Aspen, Colo., several times since 2007. Delta also has sponsored Food & Wine's best new

chefs program — celebrating its 25th anniversary this year — and held events for its top customers catered by some of these chefs.

Delta also is running a four-page spread in the July issue of Food & Wine, which covers the 2013 best new chefs. One page promotes Delta's "economy comfort" service, while others congratulate the latest best new chefs and discuss the airline's culinary team. Delta also advertises in American Express Publishing's Travel & Leisure and Departures magazines, while its Delta Private Jets subsidiary advertises in Departures.

Starting in October, videos of the chefs' cook-off will be shown on the Web sites of Food & Wine and Delta's in-flight magazine and as part of the in-flight entertainment on Delta. The videos also will be promoted through social media channels of Food & Wine and Delta, and in issues of Sky, the airline's in-flight magazine, and of Food & Wine.

Christina Grdovic, Food & Wine senior vice president and publisher, said magazine and airline officials jointly concluded that a cooking contest to identify the latest member of Delta's culinary team "makes sense for Delta because its tagline is, 'Keep climbing.'"

Ms. Grdovic added, "They're committed to having a really good culinary program in the air."

She said the promotion also would provide "really, really good exposure" for the magazine. Delta, one of five airlines that advertise in Food & Wine, is buying a total of 11 pages of advertising in six issues of Food & Wine in 2013, and space on the magazine's Web site, Ms. Grdovic said.

Ms. Smith said the contest was

part of an effort by Delta to improve its in-flight dining experience for business-class passengers, who she said "spend a lot of money flying Delta around the world and expect a fine-dining experience," a top priority, with a good night's sleep.

Neither she nor Ms. Grdovic would discuss expenditures by Delta for the cook-off promotion. According to Kantar Media, Delta's recent annual advertising spending ranged from a low of \$33 million in 2009 to a high of \$65.2 million in 2008. Kantar also estimated that Delta spent \$11.2 million on magazine advertising in 2009 and \$15.7 million in 2008.

Rick Smilow, president and chief executive of the Institute of Culinary Education in New York, predicted that the videos could help Delta put "some pizzazz and energy behind the underdeveloped concept of its culinary team."

Louise Kramer, communications director of the Specialty Food Association, called the promotion a "nice way for Food & Wine to get brand recognition for their 25-year-old best new chefs program." Because Food & Wine is owned by American Express, "it's a way to get their brand out there, too," Ms. Kramer said.

She also said there was a "thirst" among the public for cooking contests and competitions, and that it was smart for Delta and Food & Wine to "play off this popularity."

Mr. Hartevelde warned that, "Ultimately what matters is whether Delta provides the levels of budget necessary to deliver good-quality, premium cabin meals. If all they do is hire a chef and limit the chef from the budget standpoint, nobody wins."