



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# **THE PATH TO LYON BEGINS: CLUB COUPE DU MONDE DE LA PÂTISSERIE TEAM USA ANNOUNCES FINALISTS FOR 2025 NATIONAL SELECTION**

*Finalists will compete in rigorous testing of skill, creativity, and precision to earn a place on the next Pastry Team USA*

**NEW YORK, NY- 2 May 2025**— Club Coupe du Monde de la Pâtisserie Team USA is proud to announce the nine pastry chefs selected to compete in the 2025 U.S. National Selection. This prestigious competition will take place Saturday, 6 Sept. 2025, at the Washburne Culinary and Hospitality Institute during the Chicago Baking and Pastry Forum. The event will serve as a critical step in determining which chefs will represent the United States at the Americas Continental Selection in summer 2026 — the final stage before the Coupe du Monde de la Pâtisserie in Lyon, France, January 2027.

The eight-hour competition will challenge chefs across multiple disciplines, including two tasting tests and an artistic presentation. Each candidate must present a frozen entremets and a plated restaurant-style dessert. Additionally, every competitor is required to produce a showpiece crafted from either chocolate or sugar, along with a presentation display that integrates and showcases both the showpiece and frozen entremets. At the conclusion of the competition, the jury will select three chefs to represent the United States: one in sugar, one in chocolate, and one in ice. A fourth chef will be selected as the team alternate. The theme of the national selection will be revealed at a later date.

The candidates selected: (in alphabetical order)

**François Behuet - Chocolate candidate:** (Originally from: Caen, France | Currently based in: Los Angeles, CA) was the chocolate candidate for Pastry Team USA in the 2023 Coupe du Monde de la Pâtisserie. With over 20 years of experience as an Executive Pastry Chef, he has worked at prestigious locations such as The Ritz-Carlton and JW Marriott L.A. Live, The Pendry West Hollywood and Petrossian in New York. François is also an accomplished chocolatier, having hosted demonstrations and events worldwide, including at the Salon du Chocolat in Paris.

**David Bonet - Sugar candidate:** (Originally from: Villeneuve-sur-Lot, France | Currently based in: Washington, VA) is a highly skilled pastry professional with extensive international experience. He served as the Director of Operations and Creations at Lenôtre Culinary Art School in Thailand and recently has been named group executive pastry chef at The Inn at Little Washington. Over the years, he has held key positions, including executive pastry chef at the Mandarin Oriental Bangkok, Hotel Martinez Cannes and The Savoy Hotel in London. David has also worked as a pastry consultant and educator, conducting worldwide masterclasses and demonstrations.

**Joshua Cain - Chocolate candidate:** (Originally from: Stedman, NC | Currently based in: Orlando, FL) is an accomplished executive pastry chef currently leading the pastry team at Evermore Orlando Resort. He is responsible for menu creation, custom tasting menus for VIPs, and overseeing the creation of pastries and confections in a distinctive resort setting. Joshua has a strong background in high-volume production and special event planning and is dedicated to innovation in both the culinary and guest experience aspects of the resort. With over 15 years of leadership experience across prestigious resorts and hotels, he has earned multiple accolades throughout his career.

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**Daniel Joseph Corpuz - Chocolate candidate:** (Originally from: Staten Island, NY | Currently based in: New York, NY) is a Filipino-American chocolatier and founder of Daniel Corpuz Chocolatier, known for confections that reflect his cultural heritage. A graduate of The Culinary Institute of America, he has trained at top kitchens and appeared on Netflix's *School of Chocolate*. He teaches internationally and has earned recognition including "Best in Division: Chocolate" and induction into The Sweet Life Hall of Fame.

**Nicholas Forte - Tasting candidate\*\*\*:** (Originally from: Las Vegas, NV | Currently based in: Las Vegas, NV) is a graduate of The French Pastry School's *L'Art de la Pâtisserie* program. He is currently the Corporate Pastry Chef for Tao Group Hospitality's West Coast properties, where he oversees pastry operations and contributes to recipe and menu development. His previous experience includes roles at Brezza & Bar Zazu, Encore Boston Harbor, Joël Robuchon at MGM, and several other restaurants and hotels.

**Mark Freischmidt - Chocolate candidate:** (Originally from: Waukesha, WI | Currently based in: Las Vegas, NV) is an accomplished pastry chef with extensive experience in high-end hospitality, currently overseeing banquet pastry operations for Caesars Entertainment City Wide in Las Vegas. He has previously led pastry teams at renowned properties such as Dominique Ansel at Caesars Palace, Halekulani Waikiki, and The Ritz-Carlton Naples. Mark's career includes developing innovative pastry offerings, managing large teams, and earning multiple accolades, including being named Best Pastry Chef in Hawaii in 2014.

**Sarah Helzer - Tasting candidate\*\*\*:** (Originally from: North Ridgeville, OH | Currently based in: Steamboat Springs, CO) has honed her pastry expertise at distinguished venues including The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, The Fontainebleau Miami, and The Nomadic Table. While at The Greenbrier Resort, she trained under Executive Pastry Chef Jean-François Suteau and contributed to seasonal menu development, high-volume production, and kitchen operations.

**Toni Roberts - Chocolate candidate:** (Originally from: Minerva, OH | Currently based in: Chicago, IL) has an extensive career in pastry, currently serving as the Executive Pastry Chef at The Ritz-Carlton Chicago, where she oversees all pastry production, including fine dining desserts, VIP amenities, and seasonal high tea, while also contributing to off-site charitable events. Previously, she held the role of Executive Pastry Chef at theWit Hotel, managing pastry items for multiple outlets, driving sales through an online platform, and participating in high-profile events such as the James Beard Foundation Gala. Her earlier experience includes leading pastry operations at C-House Restaurant and Custom House Restaurant, with notable accomplishments such as creating desserts for high-profile events like the State Dinner at the White House.

**Jordan Snider - Sugar candidate:** (Originally from: Charleston, SC | Currently based in: Kiawah Island, SC) is an accomplished Executive Pastry Chef with extensive experience in luxury hospitality, currently leading the pastry team at The Sanctuary on Kiawah Island. With previous roles at prestigious properties such as Fairmont Grand Del Mar and Mandalay Bay Resort, he has built a reputation for creating exceptional pastries and leading high-performing teams. A member of Team USA for the Coupe du Monde de la Pâtisserie in both 2019 (alternate) and 2023 (sugar candidate), Jordan is recognized for his expertise in sugar artistry and his significant contributions to pastry competitions.

**\*\*\*NOTE: The tasting candidate will be designated as the ice candidate for the 2026 Americas Continental Selection and the 2027 Coupe du Monde de la Pâtisserie.**

## Chefs Selected to Compete at the US Pastry Team National Selection this September/Add 2

"The path to Lyon begins here, and we are thrilled to witness the incredible talent and dedication of these finalists," said Chef Stéphane Chéramy, President of Club Coupe du Monde de la Pâtisserie Team USA. "The 2025 National Selection is not only a showcase of technical skill, but also a celebration of creativity and precision that will ultimately shape the next generation of pastry champions. We are proud to support and guide these chefs as they strive for excellence on the world stage, and we look forward to the journey ahead."

The 2025 National Selection will be evaluated by an elite panel of internationally recognized pastry professionals. Club Coupe du Monde de la Pâtisserie Team USA is honored to welcome Chef Christophe Morel as Honorary President of the Jury. Scoring the competition will be Chefs Stéphane Tréand, M.O.F., Donald Wressell, Johanna Le Pape, and Eric Perez.

The National Selection is made possible thanks to the generous support of Club Coupe du Monde Team USA's partners. Valrhona serves as the organization's main founder and platinum partner, along with Truffly Made and Gourmet Foods International. Gold partners include Midwest Global Imports, Paul Strabbing, and AUI. Silver partners are Dobra, Nielsen-Massey Vanillas and Chef Rubber, with Paris Gourmet, The Pastry Depot, and King Arthur Baking Company joining as bronze partners. Koerner Company and St. Michel serve as allied partners. Chef Works | Bragard is the exclusive provider of chef wear for Pastry Team USA.

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### **About Club Coupe du Monde de la Pâtisserie Team USA**

Club Coupe du Monde de la Pâtisserie Team USA is committed to inspiring excellence, creativity, and innovation in the pastry arts. The organization selects and supports the best American pastry chefs to represent the U.S. at the Coupe du Monde de la Pâtisserie in Lyon, France. This prestigious biannual competition features 50 countries and is recognized as the premier global pastry competition. For more information, visit [www.pastryteamusa.com](http://www.pastryteamusa.com) and follow on social media @pastryteamusa.

### **(Sirha) Pastry World Cup (Coupe du Monde de la Pâtisserie): Pastry Revolution**

Pastry is emerging in the contemporary world. The desserts are now combining their sensitivity to technicality, to the new architectural and sensory expressions. Nothing stops the sweet creators of the 21st century. And since the world is moving on, the Pastry World Cup is changing dimension, with a completely rethought universal identity. Product sourcing, natural tastes, precise gestures, team spirit are combined for an intense and visionary baking experience. Pastry World Cup is organized by the global brand Sirha Food, part of the GL events group. For more information: [www.cmpatisserie.com/en](http://www.cmpatisserie.com/en)

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