

From Edible to Incredible: NAFFS Explores the Culinary Cutting Edge

Michelin-starred chef Wylie Dufresne whipped up unique and innovative creations using unusual ingredients, textures and pairings.

White chocolate-green olive sauce is not something most would choose to accompany fish, but somehow it works. Chef Wylie Dufresne and his team at WD~50 recently wowed National Association of Flavors and Food-Ingredient Systems' (NAFFS) members with whimsical, innovative dishes that were equal parts creativity, familiarity and heavenly satisfaction.

Held in November at the nearly decade-old WD~50 in Manhattan, the morning began with some season-appropriate fancifully flavored and funnily named cocktails: Santa's Little Helper (vodka, cranberry, peppermint) and Treez Nutz (Damson gin, black walnut amaro, dry curacao), Oliver Clothesoff (centrifugal dirty martini) and Unquiet American (Campari, smoked vermouth, CO₂).

NAFFS president Scott Riefler (TIC Gums) introduced Dufresne by citing a recent *New York Times* article that referred to Dufresne as "one of the most influential culinary minds on the planet." Throughout the eight-course lunch, applause



From left, Lee Beuk (Aroma Chemical Services International), Glenn Hornedo (Fragrance Resources) and Bea Hornedo (Bontoux)



Chef Wylie Dufresne, left, and Scott Riefler (TIC Gums)



Deconstructed eggs Benedict with cubes of deep-fried hollandaise



From left, Cathianne Leonardi (Allen Flavors), Marie Wright (Wild Flavors) and Paige Crist (P&F Magazine)



Craig Hagelin (Hagelin International), left, and Mike Bloom (Flavor & Fragrance Specialties)



Grace Alloca and Arthur Curran (both Citrus & Allied)

and several cries of “I love you” directed at Dufresne could be heard around the room, especially when diners were served the chef’s famed rendition of eggs Benedict (pictured), which includes cylindrical egg yolks topped with paper-thin squares of crisp Canadian bacon and molten hot cubes of deep-fried hollandaise.

Another plate, called “foie-lafel,” was a skewed take on the falafel. This playful sandwich was a dressed-up nod to the neighborhood food carts. Dufresne encouraged diners to pick up the pita pockets, which, in lieu of chick-peas, contained deep-fried balls of *foie gras de canard* enrobed in the seasonings of the all-familiar falafel (cumin, coriander, garlic). Dufresne likes to

mix the familiar with the unfamiliar in order to bring comfort to the creativity he serves up.

Dufresne spoke frequently of using texture in his dishes and uses ingredients and instruments most-often reserved for food-science, not fine-dining, to transform ingredients and create the fanciful forms he desires. It was a pleasure and a privilege to experience the culinary creativity of Dufresne and his team.

—Paige Crist, P&F Magazine

To purchase a copy of this article or others, visit www.PerfumerFlavorist.com/magazine. 