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American Cuisine Educational Training and Promotion

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Report Highlights:

On September 26-27, 2011, ATO Guangzhou launched a major American Cuisine Chef Training with Starwood Hotels and Resorts Asia Pacific Food and Beverage China Sub-council in Guangzhou's newly opened Sheraton Hotel. ATO Guangzhou was instrumental in cooperating with the Culinary Institute of America to conduct a two-day training workshop for 20 experienced chefs from the Starwood hotel chain. The training included basic knowledge of American regional cuisine as well as a hands-on cooking experience and recipe development workshop. This educational opportunity for Starwood chefs increased their knowledge of American Cuisine putting them in contact with local vendors that source U.S. ingredients. In addition, a promotion for the purpose of increasing consumer awareness of American food items was conducted through the most popular and widely used social communication platform in China (Sina Weibo).

Background on the American Cuisine Chef Training Program for the Starwood Hotel Chain

China is one of the Starwood chain's most overseas market, with 160 hotels nationwide scheduled to open in the next five years. Starwood China is focusing on promoting and beverage preparation prowess. The interested in working with ATO Guangzhou improve their chefs' understanding of cuisine and increase the usage of U.S. food ingredients in their dishes and menus. of this event, ATO Guangzhou increased the U.S. ingredients and wine in several hotel menus. ATO Guangzhou invited David Kamen from the Culinary Institute of to lead this program. His mandate was to U.S. ingredients in recipes covered throughout the training course.



Two-day American Cuisine Chef Training at Sheraton

important and 93 This year, their food group is to American Because amount of Starwood Professor America highlight

In addition to organizing the training program, ATO Guangzhou also worked with Betty's Kitchen, the number one cooking lifestyle multi-media platform in China, to increase consumers' interest and familiarity with U.S. products via micro-blog engagement. ATO Guangzhou decided to promote U.S. ingredients in this social network site as it is the most successful and well-known communication and information sharing tool used by 90 percent of Chinese netizens with more than 140 million users. Additionally, Sina micro-blog is an effective marketing platform for organizations and companies promoting specific ideas, products, and services. Through user (microbloggers') comments and questions, Chinese consumers' knowledge of the different types of U.S. agricultural commodities was re-evaluated and the findings were shared with U.S. producer groups. The entire program, including the invitation of the chef trainer, food and wine pairing dinner, as well as American food educational promotion was carried out with the Emerging Market Funding for the Hotel and Restaurant Industry.

U.S. food ingredients and wine shared the spotlight



Participating USDA cooperators

Besides sharing the knowledge of American Cuisine with local consumers, the main objective behind this chef training was to increase the usage of U.S. food items in the fastest growing hotel chain in China: Starwood. The training could not have come together without the support of several of U.S. producer associations, including the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, California Prune Board, California Milk Advisory Board, U.S. Meat Export Federation, U.S. Dairy Export Council and U.S.A. Poultry & Egg Export Council. The ingredients featured included Alaska sockeye salmon, pacific cod, pollock roe, shredded mozzarella, California prunes, U.S. pork, American chicken leg quarters and drumsticks, Land o'

Lakes brand: cream cheese, Monterrey Jack, hot pepper Jack, Colby Jack, cheddar, parmesan cheese, and Dairy Life brand cream cheese. These ingredients were presented in the recipe development

throughout the course and hands-on cooking tutorials. An American food and wine pairing dinner after the training also received sponsorship from Evolution Time International Ltd. where California wines from Castoro Cellars and Niner Estate were paired with the dishes. ATO Guangzhou did not forget to include U.S. wine in the training as it is an important value-added U.S. agricultural export. For participating chefs, the training was an example of making practical use of one's knowledge in American cuisine. From our U.S. producer associations' perspective, it was an excellent platform to increase U.S. ingredient sales.

For a sample of the American Cuisine Chef Training at Sheraton Guangzhou hotel, please refer to the link:

http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMzE0NDYyMDEy.html

On September 27, the American cuisine chef training press release included professor Kamen's cooking demonstration and a certificate ceremony attracting over 30 local leading food and beverage media reporters. As a result, participating chefs have a more in-depth understanding of regional cooking styles differences in the States. Chef Kamen's designed the American cuisine recipes for this two day training, and the sponsored U.S. ingredients were strategically incorporated throughout the training course, cooking demonstration as well as a food and wine pairing dinner during September 26-27 indicated in the list as below:

American Cuisine Chef Training Recipes	Sponsored U.S. Ingredients
1. Manhattan fish chowder	Pork and pacific cod
2. Jerk chicken with pineapple-jicama salsa	Chicken drumsticks
3. Amish-style chicken and corn soup	Chicken paws
4. Fish and chips	Pacific cod fillets
5. Margarita pizza	Mozzarella cheese, shredded
6. Chicken and Andouille gumbo	Chicken drumsticks
7. Guava-glazed pork ribs	Pork spareribs
8. Buttermilk fried chicken with country gravy	Chickens leg quarters
9. Country gravy	Chicken paws
10. Shrimp and chicken jambalaya with Andouille sausage	Chicken drumsticks
11. Buffalo-style chicken paws with blue cheese dipping sauce	Chicken paws
12. Cedar-planked salmon with blackberry-zinfandel sauce	Sockeye salmon fillets
13. Ancho-cumin crusted seared salmon	Salmon fillet
14. Cheddar scalloped potatoes	Cheddar cheese Parmesan cheese
15. Memphis "Dry" rub ribs	Pork spareribs
16. Kansas city ribs	Pork spareribs
17. Macaroni and cheese with bacon	cheddar cheese
18. Prune Bread Pudding	California prunes
19. Three cheese quesadilla	Monterey Jack cheese, shredded/ Pepper Jack cheese, shredded/ Cheddar cheese, shredded
20. Baja style fish tacos with slaw and Mexican crema	Pacific cod fillets/ Mozzarella cheese, shredded

21. New England fish chowder with Pollock roe crostini	Pacific cod, Pollock roe
22. Grilled Iowa pork chops with cherry cola sauce and caramelized apples	Iowa pork chops
23. New York –style cheesecake	Cream cheese
24. Stewed prune and Armagnac compote	California prune

Great American Food Educational Promotion and Research

The chef training created an opportunity for culinary professionals to learn about U.S. food items. Consumer awareness was also emphasized in addition to highlighting the quality and value of U.S. products. For this reason, ATO Guangzhou worked together with Betty’s Kitchen to launch the Great American food educational promotion under the slogan “American Cuisine, delight your palate with the world’s best ingredients” from September 15 to October 15, 2011. Through its official Sina Weibo over 387,000 microbloggers and netizens are encouraged to design recipes based on the sponsored U.S. food items. Through this platform, Chinese consumers have access to accurate information about U.S. producer associations’ mission in China, as well as information about the U.S. agricultural commodities themselves, ranging from the manufacturing procedures, product quality, nutrition, and taste.

According to the program report prepared by Betty’s Kitchen, 24 messages regarding the American cuisine chef training program and the agricultural commodities educational promotion posted on Betty’s Kitchen’s official microblog Weibo), which generated 926 reposts and received 381 comments. That is to say, the six producer associations, including their websites related products, were exposed to over 387,000 microbloggers. An advertising banner on



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Betty’s Kitchen’s website featured an American themed promotion was showcased to over 5 million netizens and received 861 hits. Moreover, the American cuisine chef training press release organized at Sheraton Guangzhou hotel was recorded by Betty’s Kitchen professionals. The content includes a chef trainer’s cooking demonstration, certificate ceremony, interview of ATO Guangzhou Director, as well as U.S. producer associations and products. This eye catching video clip will be uploaded, viewed and shared by Chinese audiences through social network sites including: Tudou (the largest video website) and Youku (China’s version of Youtube). The video will be showcased on the front page of Betty’s Kitchen official website for a two-week period.

For a more vivid example of the American Cuisine Chef Training press release event, please browse through the video clip as below:

Tudou : <http://www.tudou.com/programs/view/B7r7W-W1USI/>
 Youku : http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMzE4MjcwODYw.html

The six U.S. producer associations provided consumer marketing information that was readily accessible to the public. Through the educational messages posted on the Sina weibo micro blog site, we can evaluate Chinese consumers’ level of awareness of U.S. ingredients. Many local consumer comments

and questions indicated the lack of knowledge of U.S. agricultural commodities. Below are major questions and comments posted by microbloggers:

Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute

- Are all Alaska seafood farm raised? Is it still safe to eat wild salmon? Does wild salmon contain traces of Japan's radioactive material? American consumers are lucky they still wild fishery resources.

California Milk Advisory Board/ U.S. Dairy Export Council

- Some Chinese consumers are not used to eating cheese, and U.S. cheese is not as salty as that from Tasmania, Australia. How can we eat cheese in a proper way to benefit our health?

U.S. Meat Export Federation

- U.S. pigs are raised with clenbuterol, but Chinese consume the meat just the same.
- In America, some plant slaughter procedures differ from China, such as they do not drain the blood from the pork, will this give the finished product an unfavorable odor?
- Is the China market open to U.S. pork at this moment? Many people believe the quality of U.S. beef is the best in the world but Mainland consumers cannot taste it because of political disagreements between our governments?

U.S.A. Poultry & Egg Export Council

- Are U.S. chickens are raised with steroids, same as in some European countries?
- U.S. poultry are not raised with steroids or other additives, the United States produces safe food, unlike China who has food safety irregularities on a daily basis. This is shameful to China.
- Some consumers asked whether U.S. chickens are fed with genetically modified corn or soybeans.
- U.S. chicken is not as tasty as those of China, the meat quality is disappointing, but at least it is safe to eat, unlike Chinese chicken. Who knows what type of chemical additives were included while the animal was raised or as it was being processed. I wish I could eat everything American.

California Prune Board

- Is it safe for pregnant women to consume California prunes?

The feedback is useful to ATO offices and our U.S. producer associations as another indicator to evaluate consumers' awareness of their products and decide which aspect we should pay more attention to in the future. From this online education promotion, we gained a clearer picture of the direction of our marketing efforts and of the knowledge gap. As we continue to linking media outreach to targeted consumer education campaigns the generated consumer information on gender, age, and level of awareness and impression of U.S. agricultural products gives ATOs a better understanding of what aspects of the message need to be emphasized in upcoming marketing campaigns.

Chef Training Feedback

ATO Guangzhou and Sheraton Guangzhou hotel both conducted training surveys with the 20 chef participants. Those who submitted their feedback strongly agreed the program helped them strengthen their confidence in preparing American cuisine and increasing their usage of U.S. ingredients. The

program included a clause encouraging the hotels to organize an American food promotion, or at least add several American dishes to their buffet menu.

Below is the summary of feedback collection from most of the participating chefs:

Hotel Name Chef Participants	Overall Impression	Interest in U.S. Ingredients	Scheduled American Food Promotion
Westin Pazhou Liang Zhichao	Good		April, 2012
Westin Pazhou Yang Zhenguo	Good		April, 2012
Sheraton Jiangyin George Liu	Excellent	American turkey, U.S. poultry	2011 Thanksgiving and Christmas
Sheraton Haikou Resort Rolland Cedric Nicolas	Excellent	Ingredients from Hawaii	
Sheraton Dameisha Resort Luca Pulese	Excellent	Molasses, American cheese, chillies, guava paste, seafood	Will have American special dishes for Halloween and Thanksgiving. A real American promotion will be schedule in 2012
Le Meridien Cyberport Wallace Shum	Excellent	Beef, veal, pork ribs, chicken, duck, dairy product, vegetable and fruits	Thanksgiving American dinner buffet on Nov. 24
Sheraton Guangzhou Huadu Resort George Qu	Good	Live oysters, Alaska crab, turkey	The new hotel will be open in November and will promote American food afterwards
Sheraton Zhoushan Hotel Colin Pan	Excellent	Alaska seafood and U.S. meat	Planning with F&B for a promotion
Four points by Sheraton Shenzhen Jacky Zeng	Good	U.S. spice	Will pick up several recipes learnt during the training and add it to the hotel buffet
Sheraton Haikou Resort Jason Li	Excellent	U.S. turkey and meat	Have American food promotion in Halloween 2011
Sheraton Wenzhou Michael Zhou	Excellent	Any source of U.S. ingredients are interested	The hotel's Feast restaurant shall start American food festival in November
Four points by Sheraton Guangzhou Robert Zhong	Good	U.S. turkey, chicken seafood	Already have American styled dishes in their buffet
Sheraton Guangzhou Hotel Andy Lin	Excellent	U.S. turkey, chicken, American cheese	American cuisine promotion starts in October and will last till Thanksgiving 2011
Sheraton Zhoushan Hotel Leslie Wang	Excellent		Planning with F&B for a promotion
Le Meridien Xiamen William Qiu	Excellent	Alaska seafood	Christmas 2011 till January 2012

Expected Results and Desired Outcomes

The ideal result of this chef training program is to increase the sales of U.S. food products in Starwood hotels. According to the training feedback survey to the 20 participants, many of the chefs have plans to purchase different types of American products for their hotels. Also, ATO Guangzhou has been encouraging the participating chefs to launch an American cuisine menu promotion in their respective hotels after the training. Several of the Starwood hotels have already launched their American Cuisine Menu promotion or American food festivals.

Promoting U.S. Wine, an ATO Guangzhou priority

ATO Guangzhou assisted Castoro Cellar and Niner Estate Winery from Paso Robles in incorporating their wines in the American food and wine pairing dinner in the Sheraton Guangzhou hotel after the chef training. It was a good opportunity for the Starwood hotel culinary professionals to taste American wines which are not included in the Starwood World Wine Program. Hopefully, more U.S. wines with competitive pricing can be featured in Starwood hotel menus. Starwood currently carries Robert Mondavi, Kendall Jackson and Chateau St. Michelle wines. Sheraton Guangzhou Hotel has requested Niner Estate Winery to send over a quotation for their consideration.



Announcement posted on Sina Weibo for the American Cuisine Menu Promotion at Sheraton Guangzhou Hotel's Feast Restaurant

Actual Results and Outcomes

Some of the participating hotels began promoting American food in their respective hotels shortly after the chef training, as there are two major western holidays coming up in November and December, which will attract a lot of Chinese consumers and foreign guests. Sheraton Guangzhou hotel took the lead in launching an American

Cuisine Menu Promotion in their Feast Restaurant from October 17 till the end of November. At the event, traditional American food paired with California and Washington wine will present new and exciting options. Ingredients used for recipe development include U.S. pork spareribs, American chicken paws, chicken legs, U.S. cream cheese, and U.S. potatoes. ATO Guangzhou will report with further details and photos once this promotion is successfully completed.

Four points by Sheraton has already adopted some of the American recipes learned from the chef training course and have included them into their buffet line at the popular Eatery restaurant. Currently, they are using American turkey, chicken and seafood as ingredients in their catering business.

Another participating hotel, the Cyberport Le Meridien hotel is organizing a Thanksgiving American Cuisine buffet promotion in their Prompt Restaurant on November 24. According to the menu designed by their executive sous chef, U.S. beef short ribs, pork ribs, American chicken, Alaska salmon, U.S. turkey, Mozzarella cheese, shredded will be utilized for the hot food items.

For other Starwood hotels planning American Food promotions, please refer to the schedule below:

Sheraton Wenzhou	Thanksgiving holiday 2011
Le Meridien Xiamen	Christmas 2011 to January 2012
Westin Pazhou Hotel	April 2012
Four Points by Sheraton Guangzhou Dongpu	Spring 2012
Sheraton Guangzhou Huadu Resort	Spring 2012

Contact Us

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