

# BOCUSE BOUND

By Lisa Shrewsberry

**T**his isn't an episode of *Chopped*. No namby-pamby basket of mystery ingredients with sandwich cookie or gummy bear spoilers. Just the chef, his apprentice, Corey Siegel, and 5 1/2 hours of intense, live international-level competition, held in the birthplace of haute cuisine — France.

West Virginians don't care that Chef Richard Rosendale is native to the Keystone State. Or that he won the January 2012 Bocuse d'Or USA national competition with a Pennsylvania-inspired presentation — food arranged in tiers to mimic the cantilevered architecture distinguishing Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater. The young, energetic and accomplished Executive Chef of The Greenbrier is, by our account, our own.

Rosendale toils today in his underground challenge kitchen, the former Bunker cafeteria, now refashioned to precise dimensions and layout of the one he'll step into in Lyon. The chef is preparing for battle at the Bocuse d'Or World Cooking Contest in 2013, where he says the U.S. in competitions past has "struggled to get near the podium."

It isn't literally French for Super Bowl of Food, but it should be. Bocuse d'Or, the impressive event named after revered French Chef Paul Bocuse, founder, has existed since 1987 and, according to seasoned competitor Rosendale, who was captain of the U.S. Culinary Olympic team that won three gold medals, "it's like Iron Chef on steroids."

Indicating boxes of silver platters meant for presentation, one seemingly smallish yet crucial element he estimates totaling \$30,000, Rosendale maneuvers around other recently opened boxes containing pricey, spon-

Greenbrier Executive Chef Richard Rosendale is U.S.'s hope for culinary world glory

sor-donated equipment. Thermal immersion circulators, high-tech ovens and blast chillers — apparatus intended to transform ingredients have been arriving at The Greenbrier since the announcement of his win. What these boxes and their contents say without saying, according to Rosendale, is that America's cadre of chefs is counting on him to ascend to the elusive Bocuse d'Or podium.

"The expectation here is if you're not first, you lose. In other cultures, they celebrate whatever the outcome. The U.S. is different. It's part of our culture to be first."

The highest an American has placed so far at Bocuse d'Or is 6th place, while the nearest North American achieved 4th.

A fierce competitor, driven by his passion for his craft, Rosendale has the confidence to win. He's been described as militant in regard to his level of organization when attacking a challenge. He has to be. As commander in chief of the entire expanding world of food, beverage and fine dining at The Greenbrier, and as a parent along with his wife, Laura, of two young children (including a newborn), disorganization would quickly sink the captain of culinary.

Behind the kitchen, in The Greenbrier's Bocuse war room, an atomic clock counts down the seconds to actual competition. On an adjacent

wall, covered in dry erase boards, is Rosendale's life for the next year mapped out in front of him, down to the stopping of the clock in 300-plus days. "P" is for practice. "E" is exercise, days when he runs, bikes and otherwise sweats with personal trainers Bobby Guet and Alinda Perrine for stress relief and to improve his endurance.

"Once you step into the kitchen there (at Lyon), that's it," explains Rosendale. Whether burned, irretrievably spilled or forgotten, errors translate into one dire language: Too bad.

Over the next several months, Rosendale will consult with famed American chefs and restaurateurs Thomas Keller and Emeril Lagasse, as well as train alongside past winners of the Bocuse d'Or. Taking into account that he has just spent a day liquefying apples to transform into a sheet, and practicing on rutabagas for a single intricate garnish — he has bitten off much, but not more than his natural talent and classical training can chew.

"To foodies, this is a very important competition. It has really put The Greenbrier on the culinary map," he says.

Post-competition, Rosendale plans to revitalize The Greenbrier's tradition of cooking classes for visitors, inspired by tableside diners-as-audience demonstrations he recently experienced in Norway. He also intends to leverage the worldwide attention wrought by the Bocuse d'Or to promote America's Resort.

"We want to create an environment that is as exciting for chefs as it is for guests. This will be a destination where some will come just for the food and beverage experience."

Connect to Chef Richard Rosendale and Student Chef Corey Siegel and root for them along their path to the extraordinary Bocuse d'Or at [richardrosendale.com](http://richardrosendale.com).