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EDITORS RELEASE

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Minnesota Wild Rice Contest Winner Holds Her Own On World Food Stage

When Sharon Holland entered her [Wild Bacon-Bleu Stuffed Filet Mignon](#) recipe in the Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council's 2015 recipe contest, she hadn't imagined she'd soon be cooking alongside professional chefs at the World Food Championships (WFC) – and holding her own.

Holland, from St. Louis Park, MN, garnered the 'Get Wild with Wild Rice' contest's People's Choice Award and was chosen to compete in the 2015 WFC, held in Kissimmee, FL, in early November. That competition pitted professional chefs and winners of various recipe and cookoff-contests against each other for a \$100,000 cash prize. Nearly 400 competitors from across the U.S. and 17 other countries created recipes in one of nine categories.

Holland and her sous chef, Susan Heuer, also of St. Louis Park, came away with first place in the first-round competition and ninth overall out of 43 contestants in the Recipe category. That put them on the "Top Ten Finalist" list for their category.

In round one, they had two hours to prepare the signature dish that won the Minnesota contest – the [Wild Bacon-Bleu Stuffed Filet Mignon](#) recipe – and to create a second recipe that included corn relish. Those two creations gained her first place in that round.

Holland says she's "thrilled" that the Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council chose her to attend the WFC. "It was absolutely the most wonderful experience. Also, the most exhilarating and exhausting experience!" says Holland. "You had to be extremely creative besides having a lot of stamina and able to work under pressure."

She credits their success in part to her heritage as an Iowa farmer's daughter with an incredible cook for a mother, and to the teamwork between herself and Heuer. Holland is a realtor and Heuer is an artist and designer. "Susan is so creative and has a sense of foods that can be put together. Then I actually cook them, so we're a great team that way. We call ourselves "The Dynamic Duo."

At the WFC, Holland and Heuer were amazed at the overwhelming number of professional chefs and the amount of food expertise surrounding them. At the same time, they were astounded that they were treated as celebrities. The competitions were held in out-of-doors kitchens, allowing the general public to talk with and take photos of contestants as they prepared their dishes.

She says their wild rice-filet mignon dish is relatively simple to prepare, delicious and elegant to serve. During November, the Grand Casino's Winds Steakhouse [Chef Tour](#) is serving that dish as its main course. The recipe can be found on the [Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council's website](#).

The Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council was formed in 1974 to benefit growers of cultivated wild rice in Minnesota. It is the Council's mission to promote the cultivated wild rice industry through leadership, research, promotion and education. For more information, visit mnwildrice.org.



Sharon Holland, right, with her sous chef, Susan Heuer, created winning recipes in one of 50 outdoor kitchens at the World Food Championships in Florida after being chosen to attend by the Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council.