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PHILLY-THEME DISH TO HIT ARENA MENUS NATIONWIDE

Design a new dish for sports fans? Two chefs decided to combine soft pretzels and cheesesteaks as baseball-size croquettes, tuck them into a fryer, and serve them with a warm cheese dipping sauce.

Pretzel-crusting Philly cheesesteak croquettes will join seven other new dishes as soon as this fall on the menus at stadiums, arenas, convention centers, and catering properties managed by Spectra, the management company owned by Comcast-Spectacor.

The croquettes – by chefs Mark Borowski, a Philadelphia native who is executive chef at Jungle Island in Miami, and Travis Wilson, executive chef at Blue Wahoos Stadium in Pensacola, Fla. – won an in-house “Iron Chef”-style competition that was part of Spectra’s Culinary Innovation Summit last week in Chicago.

Spectra provides food services and hospitality to more than 200 client properties in North American and Canada. Jean-Marie Lacroix, chef/partner at Spectra’s newly acquired, Philly-based Brûlée Catering, was among the judges.

Borowski and Wilson also won second place with flatiron steak churrasco paired with a pineapple mojito – a flatbread cone filled with slaw, chipotle vinaigrette, beef skewers and topped with chimichurri popcorn.

The six other new dishes are:

- North African fire-roasted chicken flatbread tacos (hummus, roasted tomatoes, pickled kohlrabi with chilis and cilantro).
- Beer-infused beef short rib sandwich (a grilled cheddar cheese sandwich with short rib and served on a pretzel bun with lemon myrtle aioli and charred red wine onions).
- Citrus pork empanadas with “tropical super-slaw” (pork shoulder, mashed butternut squash, brie, diced pineapple and orange juice, with a slaw of watermelon radish, coconut rum vinaigrette, and citrus ginger tomato coulis).
- Vegetarian muffalatta (on a grilled flatbread rubbed with pepperberry kale pesto and filled with butternut squash, watermelon radish, Brussels sprout petals, avocado, oven-roasted tomatoes, grilled artichokes, and red onion, tossed with a sambal oelek harissa yogurt).
- Turkey “Sustain-a-Burger” on a pretzel bun (blended with quinoa, oyster mushrooms, soy sauce, ginger and spices, topped with tomato ginger chutney, with a side of flash-fried Brussels sprout petals seasoned with lemon myrtle).
- Pepperberry-dusted fries (served with roasted tomato ketchup and rosemary lemon dipping sauces).