

Ritz-Carlton elevates s'mores to a higher level



Homemade marshmallows raise s'mores at the Ritz-Carlton Lake Tahoe to gourmet status. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

TRUCKEE – Charred. That's how the chef likes her marshmallows.

Daniella Rinaldi prepares about 2,000 of these gooey squares each week at the Ritz-Carlton Lake Tahoe. Then guests turn them into s'mores.

Rinaldi likes when hers catch fire. That's what happens when the stick stays static. To get an even golden hue it requires

constant turning. Then the inside is totally melted.



Pastry Chef Daniella Rinaldi says marshmallow trays must rest for 12 hours before they can be cut. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

These are no ordinary marshmallows. Egg whites, sugar, corn syrup, water and gelatin never tasted so good. To this taste tester it seemed like the difference was more than the flavorings. What that extra might be the pastry chef was keeping a secret.

Over the massive gas fire pits on the back patio of the resort hotel guests are invited each day at 4:30 to partake in a free

s'mores extravaganza. (If others show up, they won't be turned away.) Often there is a line before the first marshmallow is speared and set on fire. Each day a flavored marshmallow and regular one are available.



The fire pit beckons people to come make a s'mores each afternoon at the Ritz. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

One outing was not enough for Lei Mikawa and Isreal Nahsohn of Napa. They saw the platter of s'mores ingredients at check-in and made a beeline to the fire pit. The fun of roasting the marshmallow brought them back another afternoon.

They are typical of the usual crowd – adults seem to have more fun; it's nostalgic for them.

Eleven chairs surround the fire – ideal for hanging out, getting warm or partaking in the fun. While the logs are fake and fire is produced by gas and not wood, the marshmallow doesn't know the difference.



All the fixings for gourmet s'mores.
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The flavors change with the season and the ingredients available. In summer Rinaldi's inspiration comes from the resort's garden – fresh herbs like mint and tarragon are used. At Halloween she created Frankenstein flavor and pumpkin spice.

For *Lake Tahoe News* she shared bubble gum – which was exactly like eating a piece of bubble gum. The blue marshmallow is a hit with kids – adults are a bit more discerning. It brought back memories of when bubble gum ice cream was a favorite.

The vanilla bean lacks that distinct vanilla flavor, and instead tastes more like a regular marshmallow.

The ginger snap is like taking a spoonful of molasses – outstanding if you like that flavor.

The chocolate mint was bursting with flavor. The only problem is the marshmallow is brown so it was more difficult to know exactly when it was done roasting.



The finished product. Photo Copyright
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Ritz employees – one who is called a marshmologist – are at the ready to help turn the marshmallow into a s'mores. Pieces of Hershey's chocolate are on graham crackers waiting for the hot gooeyness to complete it.

S'mores stands for some more. Credit is given to the Girl Scouts for creating the marshmallow, chocolate, graham cracker treat; with kudos to Loretta Scott Crew for coming up with the combo in the 1920s. They are so popular that there is now a National S'Mores Day – Aug. 10.