

Marine Catering

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Catering to all tastes

How Carnival Spirit has been retooled to better serve the Aussie home market

HEALTHY EATING

Cruise passengers are increasingly health conscious



ROYAL NAVY

Food continues to play a critical role in maintaining crew morale



THE VERANDAH

Queen Elizabeth's award-winning French restaurant





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Marine Catering Services is aware that improvements need be made to seafaring cooks' knowledge via a structured course prior to cooks going to sea, with continued offshore support

By Bunny Richards

How do you make sure site visits and procedures are kept to a high level and keep within laws and regulations?

All shipping companies work to MARPOL maritime regulations. I visit each ship twice a year or more, if required by any company, to elevate standards in line with laws and regulations.

How do you keep your staff up-to-date within the industry?

All staff are self-employed and expected to keep up-to-date with industry laws and practices. However, as part of our company responsibilities we ensure that refresher skills and staff performance levels are assessed on a regular basis, within an

appraisal and development structure related to performance reports recorded on each vessel they visit.

You cater for special diets and the preferences of different nationalities. Do you change these menus on a regular basis, or you have special dietary menus and keep to them throughout the year?

We cater for the culinary requirements of all nationalities we deal with on board and we change the menus twice yearly to follow a five weekly cycle during these two six monthly periods. Special diets are formulated on a one-to-one basis where we can assist, however we are very careful here as we are not nutritionists.



Henry Anderson busy at work in the kitchen with other staff members



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Development of seafaring catering staff

During discussions with shipping companies, MCS was asked to become involved with the further development of seafaring catering staff. The primary challenge was to investigate the synergies available within the group and identify potential improvements that could be achieved in the current standards.

CORE AREAS OF STUDY:

- Implementation of HACCP. It became law in January 2006 for all shipping to achieve this standard under (EC) No.852/2004. The ILO will look at these systems as part of its remit;
- Development in staff stock control and implementation of a victualing program and administration;
- Catering operations and process controls;
- Development in catering staff hygiene with a certificate awarded on completion of the CBT course;
- Development in catering work and risk assessment;
- Development in controlled structured safety;
- Development in the use and implementation of daily safety talks;
- Culinary training, menu planning and structure, defrosting procedures, food temperature control systems and educating catering staff in the flow system of work;
- Development of staff's personal safety responsibilities.

How easy is it to keep to clients' cost budgets?

I can always make savings in all clients' costs within the victualing budget without reducing the standard of food produced or services on board. For example, eliminating or greatly reducing daily wastage, good butchery skills, which parts of meat to use to optimise yield, stock levels for each vessel controlled via MCS victualing program, so that there is no over purchasing resulting in dead stock on-board that is past its use by date, structured a la carte menus, dealing with suppliers and getting discount on each purchase - without detriment to produce standards purchased, by introducing ethizone filters in veg rooms to lengthen life of vegetables.

Tell me about the onshore training you are planning? How will it help chefs in the industry?

MCS is very aware that improvements can be made to seafaring cooks' knowledge - and it is required. However I have to note that this would be accomplished more effectively as part of their on-going training during an onshore course conducted by our company at client's request. The syllabus is still under development and will be constructed according to each client's specific requirements and the budget and time schedule they have allocated for their staff.

What changes do you see happening to MCS in the next five to 10 years?

We would like to see expansion in our clientele and to be recognized as leaders in the market by virtue of the excellence of the service we provide. ●



BIOGRAPHY



Henry Anderson is the catering consultant and development chef at Marine Catering Services (MCS), the company was formed in 2004. Anderson always knew he wanted to be a chef, and having grown up in Aberdeen, opportunities arose for him to do so

in the offshore industry. Having trained as a chef, Anderson gained valuable experience in a number of hotels, and large commercial units. In 2000, while employed by a large catering company, he joined its offshore development and travelled internationally, assessing and training multi-national catering staff

to rehis industry standards on an international oil/gas merchant tanker fleet, as well as working as chef/manager on the oil rigs. Currently he is in charge of training on board NLNG ships and is in the process of bringing new contracts with other shipping lines into the business.