



Iron Chef Calls On London Lennies

By **MARVIN ANDERSON**

For London Lennies executive chef Jeff Baruch, the daily grind of quickly and skillfully preparing gourmet meals is an ultimate rush. The opportunity to showcase his skills on Food Network's "Iron Chef" was even more exhilarating, he said.



London Lennies Executive Chef Jeff Baruch will be featured as a sous chef

Baruch participated in Iron Chef as a sous chef for Sue Torres, his former sous chef. Baruch calls the competition a "twist of fate," where he, the former teacher, becomes a student to support his former pupil in a one-hour lightning round of culinary creativity.

The lights and cameras didn't affect the Long Island native much. But thinking of ways to use the team's "secret ingredient" to prepare a dish and win the competition was.

"You're first thought is, 'oh...that's the ingredient?'" he said jokingly.

Two teams use secret ingredients randomly given to them on Iron Chef to complete a dish. The dishes are judged and the team deemed the best wins the competition. Baruch was unable to divulge the ingredient before this weekend's airing of the show.

Torres, owner of Sueno in Manhattan, used her expertise in Mexican cuisine during

the competition, Baruch said. As her sous chef, he followed and gathered inspiration from experiences with Mexican cuisine while he cooked in Colorado.

The rush was all too familiar for him, Baruch said. The need for haste, presentation and taste all fed into an exhilarating moment.

"It wasn't something I was seeking out, but this opportunity fell in my lap and I wanted the challenge," Baruch said.

He considers Iron Chef to be one of his most memorable cooking moments, but working at the 50-year-old family owned London Lennies has been an extension of his journey, he said.

"This is all I've ever done," he said. At age 14, Baruch would sneak off from home to work in a restaurant. From Four Seasons to Club Med, Baruch worked to become a successful chef which added to his competitive-

ness on Iron Chef.

Baruch said his inspiration for dishes on the show, and in general, come from an array of people; friends, other chefs, his two sons Jordan and Stephen and his wife Fran.

He throws his personal touch into every dish as well. He considers his special ability a sort of consistency that brings the full potential of the food he cooks.

Baruch couldn't go into details at the time as far as who won the competition, but continued to remark on the excitement, teamwork and having drawn on his experience at London Lennies and other establishments.

While reflecting on the competition, Baruch said the opportunity to work on his passion for cuisine is what matters most.

"I can't even describe it," he said of Iron Chef. "It's the camaraderie and the adrenaline of being busy. That rush is like a drug."