

See photos of Team USA's presentation, including a white-chocolate, mango-liliko'i and raspberry gelato cake, at bit.ly/hngelatotopics.

calabash | QUOTE UNQUOTE

Doctor Gelato

In January, 13 teams from around the world traveled to Italy to compete in the seventh edition of the Gelato World Cup, a prestigious three-day competition held every two years. IL Gelato Hawai'i's **Dirk Koeppenkastrop**, who competed as Team USA's gelato maker in 2014 and captain this year, led the U.S. to a seventh place overall, a first-place victory in the ice-carving round and a third-place tie for the mystery box. The flavor? Soursop green tea.

INTERVIEW BY KATRINA VALCOURT

➔ **THAT WAS** quite an awkward flavor to pull, so I was not too happy originally. First ... I did a calamansi soursop sorbetto. [Then] I did a sweet tea because it is kind of a sweet flavor, the soursop. It didn't really come out as flavorful and as balanced as I wanted it to. The last resort was green tea and fior di latte. The texture was awesome—fior di latte is very balanced and creamy, not too fatty, and the judges were very excited.

➔ **I THINK IT'S** a really great challenge for me to work on that high level in competition because that challenges me as a gelato maker. Competing with some of the world's best gelato makers and working together with them in the preparation thereof is very rewarding because there's a lot of know-how I'm getting.

"We use Hawai'i sea salt and mix it into our caramel and swirl it into our fior di latte gelato."

➔ **I AM A CHEMIST BY TRAINING** and opened, operated, acquired and merged many laboratories throughout my professional career. I always wanted to own and operate my own lab. Once the children were out of the house, I fulfilled my dream and opened a gelato lab after studying gelato making at the Carpigiani Gelato University in Bologna, Italy.

➔ **STARTING MY OWN** gelato lab in Hawai'i was—besides marrying my wife,

Nicole, and having three wonderful children—one of the best decisions in my life.

➔ **OUR MOST POPULAR FLAVOR** besides Tahitian vanilla is Hawai'i sea-salt caramel. We developed a technique where we use Hawai'i sea salt and mix it into our self-made caramel and swirl it into our fior di latte gelato when it comes fresh out of the machine. With this technique, the saltiness is always associated with the sweetness and slight bitterness of the caramel. The gelato has a three-dimensional texture—gelato, caramel and rock sea salt.

➔ **GELATO IN GENERAL** has much less fat and sugar content than regular or premium ice cream. Our gelato has only 6 to 8 percent butterfat and sorbetto 0 percent. Ice cream can have up to three times as much butterfat. I keep saying you can eat more gelato and feel less guilty. In addition, our gelato is all natural.

➔ **WE STARTED IL GELATO** as a wholesale business and Gelato Cart Catering, and then opened the Gelato Bar in Kāhala Mall. IL Gelato Café in Hale'iwa is our first full-size gelato café. We not only sell gelato there but also breakfast, lunch and dinner alternatives. So this brings a new level of complexity and fun.

➔ **I AM EATING** a pint to a quart *a day* and don't feel guilty about it. It's in the name of quality control. But, seriously, our sorbetto, for instance, only has 80 to 90 kilocalories per half cup, so my weekly Saturday morning bike ride and a few [kitesurf] and surf sessions per week keep me in check.

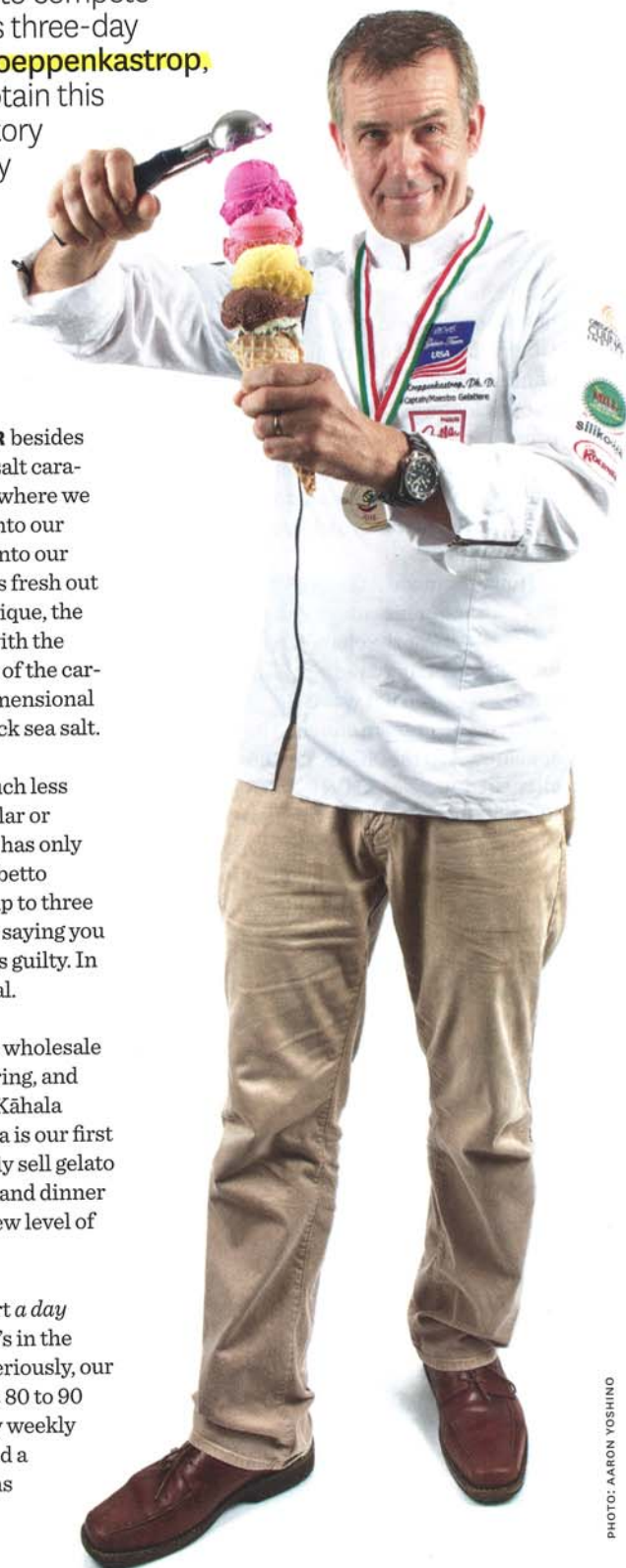


PHOTO: AARON YOSHINO