



Chronicle / Penni Gladstone

Ricardo Godinez stirs duck confit at Fabrique Délices, a French Charcuterie

Photos by PENNI GLADSTONE / The Chronicle

With retail business, "We try to be in different areas of the store," Espinasse said.

At Draeger's in San Mateo, you can get smoked chicken breast and garlic sausage at the deli counter and duck mousse with port from the cheese case. You can pick up a slice of vegetable pâté or a block of foie gras from the grab-and-go refrigerator case and choose between the scallop terrine and crab terrine with seaweed from the seafood case.

The second tier of business is white-tablecloth restaurant such as Foreign Cinema and the Butler and The Chef, both in San Francisco. Cruise ships and airlines make up the third tier - Air France, British Airways, United Airlines, Japan Airlines and China Airlines all serve individual portions of Fabrique Délices' pâtés and mousses to their first-class passengers.

As a USDA-certified plant, Fabrique Délices has a regimented process for making its products. There are separate rooms for grinding and mixing the product, dividing it into molds, cooking it, trimming and garnishing and finally, packaging and labeling.

To make a mousse, meats and fats are placed into a large grinder along with spices. The mixture then goes to the cutter, a circular machine that turns the product through a blade to achieve consistency.

The large batch of mousse is then poured into the stuffer and divided into individual molds. Employees place the molds on rolling racks and wheel them into the oven. After cooling in the refrigerator overnight, the molds are trimmed and garnished. Finally, each mold receives a layer of gelatin before it is packaged and labeled.

The most challenging products to make, Pinheiro said, are the duck confit and the foie gras.

"The ingredients are simple, but the way you do it - that's what counts. It's very simple, but very fragile. It's like having a beautiful flower. If you don't know how to take care of it, it will die," he said.

Having graduated from the renowned école Lenotre in Plaisir Cedex, France, Pinheiro keeps Fabrique Délices in a state of "constant innovation" by keeping in touch with Europe's gastronomy industry.

"We need to generate new products and new recipes every year. We don't want to be doing the same thing over and over," he said. His latest creations are the All-Natural pâtés, mousses and sausages with no preservatives, artificial ingredients or nitrites.

When Pinheiro comes up with a new idea, he first makes one to two pounds of product, using a small food processor and grinder. During the first round of testing, "You don't have any clue what you're going to get in the end," Pinheiro said. "Once you do it five or six times, you'll finally get what you're looking for."

After Pinheiro develops a base recipe, he retests the recipe on a large scale until he finds the right balance of ingredients to make 100 pounds of product.

Pinheiro's daughter, Julie, who is 16, has already decided to pursue her father's profession. When U.S. cooking schools told her she was too young to apply, she decided to head off to France to study culinary arts. Anticipating the future, Pinheiro said, "I would like to have some new ideas from the new generation."