



NEWS AND VIEWS FROM NAIT'S
SCHOOL OF HOSPITALITY AND CULINARY ARTS

BON VIVANT

FALL/WINTER 2011

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The importance of being...

ERNEST'S... *a dining experience*

Heralded as Edmonton's best kept secret, Ernest's has a well established reputation as one of the most notable dining experiences in Edmonton. An established clientele frequent the room for outstanding cuisine and exemplary service. The dining room is capably managed by Samantha Wall and an expert service brigade largely comprised of graduate students. Classroom instruction is an important component. Novice Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management students receive excellent direction from seasoned professionals. The food has been described as contemporary with classical influences. A strong focus on local products is featured. Evening dining menus include gourmet selections prepared with molecular gastronomy techniques as well as a complement of classical dishes. All menu items are prepared by aspiring Culinary Arts students with the careful guidance of award winning Chef Instructors.

During the year Ernest's features a number of prestigious dining events; wine dinners, culinary competitions and other special events.

Experienced foodies and savvy diners create brisk business for Ernest's, reservations are high in demand. Ernest's accepts a limited number of bookings for private parties and receptions, please contact 780.471.8676 or www.opentable.com for reservations.

- Lunch Monday to Thursday 11:30-12:15
- Lunch Buffet Friday 11:00-12:30
- Evening Dining 6:00-7:30



GASTRONOMY

The harmony of good food, fine wine and great conversation

NAIT Culinary Arts students are introduced to identification, appreciation and the pairing of old and new world wines by knowledgeable instructor, Samantha Wall.

Samantha's formative years were spent at Saskatoon's Delta Bessborough Hotel, Winnipeg's historical Hotel Fort Gary and Calgary's Palliser Hotel where she practiced her skills providing western hospitality.

BON VIVANT



CHEF IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM

A new benchmark of success...

Following a generous donation from John and Susan Hokanson, NAIT has established a "Hokanson Chef in Residence Program." The program provides an opportunity to recognize and honour culinary expertise. The Hokanson Chef in Residence will share experience and knowledge to inspire students, faculty and the culinary community. Differing levels of participation are incorporated, including Guest Chef in Residence, Master Chef in Residence, and Honourary Chef in Residence. Periods of engagement range from one week for Guest and Master Chefs to an annual period for Honourary Chefs. Activities include keynote presentations, interactive presentations, and special events.

Susur Lee, the third Chef in Residence has established an international reputation as a culinary genius for his inspiring interpretation of Asian cuisine, dubbed Nouvelle Chinoise. Susur's culinary experiences include operation of internationally renowned restaurants. Recognized as one of the "Ten Chef's of the Millennium", Susur is a positive role model and mentor to aspiring chefs.

MEDIA NOTE

"Dubbed the Father of Fusion, Lee built his sizable reputation on food that fused Chinese and French traditions."

*-Liane Faulder,
Edmonton Journal*



C'EST CHEESE...

"Apple pie without cheese is like a kiss without a squeeze" states an old adage. Talk about a passion for food or what! But think of it: what would life be without cheese? Boring burgers, pizza without pizzazz, flavorless fondue, mediocre macaroni... and that's just a start.

My early introduction to cheese was somewhat mundane. There was the gooey goop whizzed up and put in a glass jar: you spread it on white bread or got real fancy and dressed up a ritzy cracker. Add a stuffed olive and voila - a Canadian "horse divorce". Mmmm... who can forget the velveteen texture of processed cheese? The only thing worse than spinach stuck in your teeth was a gob of this epicurean delight. No matter which way you sliced it, the cheese we melted on our burgers surely came from discontented cows. But we've come a long way. Aside from excellent Canadian cheddars, the wheel got rolling in Québec, where we established our national identity with excellent monk-made Oka Cheese. This was followed by award-winning Blue Eremite, Le Cendrillon and Sir Laurier de Athabasca fromages.

Local Alberta producers Natricia and Leona Grana struggled unsuccessfully to find markets for their excellent artisanal cheeses. Sylvan Star persevered and has now gained international recognition for excellent Gouda's, including its award-winning Grizzly. Across the province, small, independent producers are establishing niche markets for flavorful artisanal cheeses. You'll find their products in farmers' markets and specialty stores. Encourage their efforts and buy local.

Good news! NAIT has received the support of Alberta Milk in establishing an applied research program in artisanal cheese production. Instructor Allan Roote is excited to lead this project. To upgrade his skills, he attended artisanal cheese courses at the University of Vermont. A 200-litre cheese vat helped kick start his research.

Early ventures include introducing basic cheese methodology to NAIT's Culinary Arts students. Aspiring students learn how to make fresh feta and mozzarella cheeses.

Advanced research includes mastering the art of aging gouda and firm cheeses. Future plans include the delivery of an extensive artisanal cheese-making course. As we return to the fundamentals of cooking and get back to basics, artisanal cheese-making is a fascinating exploration.

NAIT's Continuing Education programs offer a plethora of programs for the foodie.

Programs range from novice to professional. For more information, check out our calendar at www.nait.ca/epicurious.



FOODIE FACT:

Classes of Vegetarians

- True Vegetarian - will eat nothing from an animal, cooked or processed.
- Lacto Vegetarians - will eat dairy products.
- Ovo Vegetarians - will eat eggs.
- Pesco Vegetarians - will not eat red meat, but will eat fish, chicken, eggs and dairy products.

BAKING PROGRAM

Quality instruction kicks it up a notch ...

Enrolment is strong in NAIT's Baking Certificate program. Students receive intensive training in the art and science of bread, cake, and pastry making as well as advanced pastry skills. A large fully equipped bakery lab prepares students with hands-on experience and the latest technologies. The award winning instructional team is led by Program Chair Alan Dumonceaux. Alan is the Manager of Baking Team Canada and the Chair of Skills Canada Provincial Technical Committee.

World renowned Pâtissier Clayton Folkers provides instruction in advanced pastry skills, chocolate and sugar displays. He was also awarded the NAIT Instructional Excellence award. Long time Instructor Joy Mackenzie was honoured the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) instructional award; Instructor Clayton Robinson shares a solid repertoire of industry based experience.

The baking program includes a four-week professional work experience where students gain valuable practical skills in the industry.





CULINARY OPINION

On being a positive influence...

When popular musicians are interviewed, an invariable question is “Who were your influences?” Both the Beatles and the Rolling Stones attributed their early influences as Delta Blues legends Howling Wolf and Muddy Waters. One of Elton John’s namesakes was the legendary Long John Baldry. Positive influences can inspire and philosophically change attitudes and perceptions. Positive influences are usually unique, authentic and honest, becoming benchmarks of personal development. Success in the hospitality business can be an arduous and challenging journey. Long hours, low pay and sometimes stressful environments have taken a toll on many aspiring culinarians. Not all my memories of climbing the career ladder are positive, but a few kind words and good direction along the way helped me endure and succeed.

My first mentor was Swiss Chef Karl Shoenberger. Chef Karl’s prophetic advice was - “If you want to be successful in North America, learn how to make a good cup of coffee and a good hamburger.” How very true this statement was - good coffee and gourmet hamburgers are embraced by the dining public.

Years ago a wise woman Chef advised me to “never throw in your apron.” Chef Veronica suggested that if ever that occasion happened, “First cool off, count to 10, forward and then backwards. Then take off your apron, fold it into a neat square and ask to speak to the Chef”. During my career I neatly folded my apron countless times, but I never threw it in, and didn’t have to speak to the Chef either - composure saved the day!

Today as I embrace the principles of “pay it forward,” I try to be thoughtful and encouraging to culinarians pursuing their dreams. Mentoring is not only an act of kindness; it’s an age old philosophy of gifting knowledge and retaining traditional values.

*Stanley Townsend, Chair
Culinary Arts*

DID YOU KNOW?

Foodservice and Hospitality, Canada’s leading hospitality magazine identified NAIT’s Culinary Arts program and Holland College’s Culinary Arts program as two of the top cooking schools in Canada.



CCFCC HIGH SCHOOL CULINARY CHALLENGE

If you can’t take the heat...

Feb 12, 2011 - Despite frigid temperatures outside the heat was rising when fourteen teams of aspiring culinary students showed up on an early Saturday morning to compete in the Canadian Culinary Federation of Chefs and Cooks (CCFCC) High School Culinary Competition. Each three-member team had three hours to prepare a three course menu. The competency based menu required students to slice and dice, simmer, steam and sauté their way through the first two courses featuring a prairie inspired menu. The piece de resistance was the creative variations of chocolate mousse the students whipped up for dessert. “The dessert course provided the greatest opportunity for interpretation,” says competition coordinator Stan Townsend “a well executed chocolate dessert is a sure winner. This is where creative presentation skills really come into play.”

Each year three competitors are awarded a sponsored apprenticeship with Edmonton’s top chefs. The apprentice students remain engaged in competition and have successfully placed in several culinary challenges including Skills Canada. The fruits of their labour will be recognized this year when the first three apprentices will attain journeyman status. Myles Fedun one of the first sponsored students who recently won the National Junior CCFCC Culinary Competition. Myles has also won two gold medals at Skills Alberta Provincials and a silver medal at the National Skills Canada Competitions.

TOQUE DEMAGNY Scholarship dinner...

Now in its 13th year, the Toque Demagny Scholarship has evolved into an outstanding venue to profile aspiring culinarian skills. The focus of the competition is to enhance teamwork, camaraderie, and peer learning.

Unique in concept, the competition is a scholarship based on an evaluation of skill sets, unlike most scholarships that are based on academic proficiency. Twelve student teams, each comprised of a first year and second year student, prepare and present a predetermined three-course menu for a table of eight appreciative diners. A panel of respected industry chefs judge the fruits of their labors.

The competition is sponsored by Chef's Hat Inc. (Toque Demagny). Additional sponsorship is provided by the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, Warren Smith Wild Game Consultants, Alberta Pulse Growers and Etienne Guittard Chocolate. The sponsors provide over \$3000 in cash prizes.

Tickets are made available on a first come basis with a limited number reserved for students' parents, friends, spouses, etc. Tickets are sold @ \$65 each or \$500 a table. The popular event usually sells out well in advance.

Last year's winner was **Leslie Wong** along with partner **Alex Giseok Kim**.



CHAMPIONING STUDENT SUCCESS All roads lead to NAIT ...

"Who dares to teach must never cease to learn" - John Cotton Dana

The above adage captures the importance of lifelong learning. The success of NAIT's Culinary Arts program can be directly attributed to the quality of instruction shared with aspiring culinarians. The fact that 80% of NAIT's Culinary Arts Instructors are graduates of the program endorses NAIT's mission of Championing Student Success. Being able to understand from a student's perspective ensures relevance and awareness. As a school that embraces experiential learning, a strong value is placed on "doing" as opposed to "telling". Hands on instruction in state of the art labs provide a superior learning environment for engaged students.

"The apple doesn't fall far from the tree" - another adage that is validated by the experiences of Educational Lab Technicians Teja Atkinson, Josh Ward and Sheldon Polowick; all recent program graduates, who have successfully transitioned to exciting careers within the School of Hospitality and Culinary Arts.

Originally from Knoxville, Tennessee, **Josh Ward** selected NAIT, based on the quality and reputation of its programs. Josh has provided outstanding customer service in Ernest's Dining Room and participates in the coordination of special events, private dinners and provides instructional support.

Sheldon Polowick completed the professional cooking program at the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology. A NAIT Articulation Agreement, in place with SIAST provided Sheldon the opportunity to complete the second year of NAIT's Culinary Arts Diploma. It was an opportunity he didn't regret. Sheldon is now employed fulltime as a Culinary Arts Educational Lab Technician. The position has greatly expanded his culinary repertoire and experience.

Teja Atkinson a Red Seal Journeyman Cook has built a solid career applying his Culinary Arts education directly to his classroom. Teja has extensive front of the house experience providing customer service in Ernest's. Active with a number of program initiatives including Occupational Health and Safety, Teja plays a lead role in the facilitation of Ernest's functions. Teja is currently expanding his knowledge pursuing certification through the International Guild of Sommeliers.



"NAIT provides a learning environment that encourages personal and professional growth." - Teja Atkinson, Educational



BON VIVANT



SPRING CREEK RANCH STEAK SANDWICH

6oz flank steak, potato pavé, oyster mushrooms bone marrow-parsnips gratin, spelt toast

MEET THE CHEF

Locavore Chef Blair Lebsack...

Homegrown chef returns to roots - Chef Blair Lebsack's passion for food began at a young age. Raised on a family farm outside Red Deer, the family diet was based on the product at hand. Garden fresh produce, unpasteurized milk and organic meats were essential ingredients of the family larder. Upon graduation from high school, Blair completed a Food and Beverage Diploma at Red Deer College. His formative cooking experiences include extensive mentorship with Master Chef Martin Hauser at Calgary's Westin Hotel. After honing his chops in all stations of a large commercial kitchen, Blair assumed the position of Chef de Cuisine at the Red Sage, a contemporary Bragg Creek restaurant where he established his repertoire serving contemporary regional cuisine. Moving to the heart of the Rocky Mountains, Blair's next gig was in Banff at the Rocky Mountain Resort where he prepared Continental / Canadian cuisine for an international clientele. A move to Saskatchewan followed where he assumed the position of Executive Chef at Saskatoon's Radisson Hotel. Learning the nuts and bolts of Food Service Management Chef Lebsack was instrumental in developing a new restaurant concept "Aroma" for CHIP (Canadian Hospitality Investment Properties). Returning to Alberta to an opportunity to put his culinary knowledge and philosophy into practice as Executive Chef of Madison's Grill at the Union Bank Inn. Using almost exclusively local products Blair established a reputation as a talented and dedicated chef showcasing a bounty of Alberta and regional cuisine. Advocating the use of local cuisine, Blair worked closely with producers to establish a loyal following of appreciative diners. After a hiatus travelling through Europe to further educate his palate, Blair accepted a position as a Culinary Instructor at NAIT. Blair shares his culinary passion and aptitude with Apprentice and Culinary Arts students. Blair's advice for culinary success is "To be the best, use the best. Quality has no substitution."



MANGIA, MANGIA!

Chef shares secrets of success...

Luisa Magnan's love of cooking began at an early age. A daughter of a robust Italian family, her passion for cooking was influenced by her grandmother and mother's traditional family recipes. Luisa fondly remembers the best part of the cooking experience concluding with the expression "Mangia, Mangia" (eat, eat) when the family would gather together to enjoy the pleasures of the table. Fresh pasta, slow cooked sauces and delectable desserts were all part of the menu. The family recipes were so good that they were soon being sold at local farmers markets where they were "snapped up" by appreciative customers.

Luisa states that she has been blessed with a deep sense of multiculturalism. Born in Montreal, the family moved to Edmonton where she attended St. Joe's High School. Her compassion and interest in people led to her attaining a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Alberta majoring in Sociology with an emphasis in Native Studies. Several years working in child care and family support followed. Her passion for cooking remained strong, and during her studies she juggled jobs in a variety of popular restaurants and the family business *Pasta by Caterina*.

Further pursuing her culinary aspirations, Luisa completed a Culinary Arts Diploma at NAIT with honors. Her traditional background, excellent communication skills and culinary knowledge led to extensive instruction positions with NAIT Continuing Education **Epicurious** series. In 2010 Luisa joined the Culinary Arts program as a full time instructor, teaching Culinary Arts and Apprenticeship courses.

Luisa's dedication, ethics and compassion serve as positive values to novice culinarians. Luisa shares her thoughts on success "Sometimes you just have to put head down, dig deep and work harder than you ever thought possible"

Luisa enjoys quality time with her children, the various local farmers markets and of course cooking!

THE BUTCHER BLOCK

Meating expectations...

Retail Meatcutting Program Chair Dan Westgeest makes no bones about the secret ingredient used to make the outstanding sausage, hams, bacon, and value added products displayed in NAIT's popular meat store. "It's meat" says Dan "100% unaltered meat. We use no fillers, additives or by products." Sales are brisk and the customer base is strong. Westgeest adds "most of our clients are from NAIT but we also get a lot of 'in the know' customers who frequent the store to purchase quality cuts of meat and the signature in-house products". The many varieties of jerky, our pepperoni, and ready to eat products are popular with students. Foodies snap up lamb racks, stuffed pork tenderloin and bison cuts. Freezer orders are also available for those wishing to stock up. Modern technology also contributes to program success. The acquisition of a state of the art digitally programmed European smoker provides students with the skills and knowledge to produce consistent cured and smoked products. One hot item is the maple cured bacon. Enrolment is strong as a career image has become fashionable; a strong demand for authentic charcuterie items is pushed by savvy customers wanting authentic natural products. Career opportunities abound in abattoirs, custom cutting, meat stores, supermarkets, hotels and restaurants. NAIT's Retail Meatcutting program is recognized as one of the best in North America, training students who are a cut about the competition.

For more information: danw@nait.ca



Retail Meatcutting Store

A cut above...

Tuesday - Thursday

10:00-2:00



COMPETITION CORNER

NAIT Culinary students rise to the challenge...

So what does it take to compete in a Culinary Competition? Dedication, hard work, commitment and talent are words that readily come to mind. But there is much more to successful competition than meets the eye. To quote Woody Allen "80% of success is showing up." Suiting up and showing up consistently and on time are key components of success" states **Culinary Team NAIT** Manager Vinod Varshney.

Attitude is what separates the wannabes from the winners. Many relish the idea of being a winner, the recognition of accomplishment and professional stature, but quickly fall by the wayside because they are unwilling to commit the time and patience required to learn the ropes. We learn from our mistakes and require constant feedback from coaches, peers and culinary professionals. It's not for the faint of heart or the delicate ego. It's not all about artistic talent; it's about the willingness to learn, true humility is gained through the process. Practice makes perfect, all artists must spend countless hours rehearsing their craft over and over again until they master the required confidence to flawlessly deliver. "The prospector panning for gold moves a lot of gravel before a nugget may appear", says Coach Hong Chew. "Competition is not all about the gold; it's about achieving a goal by challenging your personal and professional best. It's stepping up to the plate and getting into the game."

NAIT Culinary Arts students have many opportunities to "get into the game." Throughout the year NAIT hosts numerous culinary competitions based on individual entries as well as specific team based events.

The prestigious **Toque Demagny Culinary Competition** is a unique culinary challenge that sees 12 culinary student teams cooking regional cuisine menus for medals and \$3250 in cash prizes. The menus are prepared for select table of appreciative diners. The menus feature regional foods including wild game, freshwater fish and Alberta pulses.

Serious contenders become involved with **Culinary Team NAIT**. The Team has garnered numerous medals at regional, national and international competitions. Team NAIT has also been awarded the distinction of "**Best Canadian College Culinary Team**". Some past team members now participate on Culinary Team Canada. Team NAIT recently returned from the prestigious Hong Kong International Culinary Classic at HOFEX 2011. All six Team NAIT competitors were awarded one or more medals.

Skills Canada Competitions provide an excellent venue for students to compete at provincial and national levels. It is the only national Olympic-style multi trade competition for young students and apprentices in Canada. Provincial and National competitions are held every May. The Skills Canada National Competition is held in a different province each year. The National competition is the main step for qualifying for the World Skills Competition held every two years [World Skills London 2011].

There are numerous other culinary competitions NAIT students compete in and why not? NAIT students have consistently demonstrated the ability to win.



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EDITOR:

Shereen Pennoyer

PUBLISHER:

Stanley Townsend

Phone: 780.471.8678

E-mail: hospitality@nait.ca



NAIT HOSPITALITY PROGRAMS...

A MEASURE OF SUCCESS!