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PUBLISHER
Dan Gnocato
dang@mediaedge.ca

MANAGING EDITOR
Cheryl Mah

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Tang Creative Inc.

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Fabian Bates, Dwayne Botcher
Mark Mountenay, Joe Salvo
Jim Zalusky

B.C./ALBERTA SALES
Dan Gnocato
604.739.2115 ext. 223

Advertising Sales Rep
Naomi Koit
604.739.2115 ext 224

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PRESIDENT
Kevin Brown

VANCOUVER OFFICE 402-1788 W. Broadway
Vancouver, BC V6J 1Y1
Tel: 604.739.2115
Fax: 604.739.2117

TORONTO OFFICE 1000-5255 Yonge St.
Toronto, ON M2N 6P4
Tel: 416.512.8186
Fax: 416.512.8344

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MENTORING FUTURE CHEFS

In June 2011, our AGM was held in Burnaby. It was an evening of celebrating the exiting of chef Donald Gyurkovits as president of the B.C. Chefs' Association (BCCA) and entering into a three year term as president of the CCFCC. Again congratulations to chef Gyurkovits on a job well done. Meanwhile, we had our elections for the second vice president and president of the board of directors at the BCCA. Chef Adi Bernhard was elected as second vice president and I was elected as the president. This will be my second time around as president. Now I get to actually chair the meetings as opposed to being the chairman of the board. And of course this would also be chef Bernhard's second time around too, in which he previously held the role of the treasurer.

The BCCA hosted the 48th annual CCFCC conference, and as far as I can recall, this would have been the largest conference held. Competitions, seminars, showmanship, hospitality, all were done professionally.

As president of the BCCA, I plan to continue working on our membership drive, chef and junior chef challenges, and maintain our mentoring to our junior chefs. After all, when I was the president five years ago, I came up with

a slogan that said: "Our junior chefs are our future chefs." In the last four years I can proudly say that the four British Columbia chapters hold the best retention and mentorship of junior chefs across Canada.

Our meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month. Except for December, we hold a Children's Christmas party. In April 2012 we will attempt to bring back the associate members show display of their products. In May our meeting is held on the first Sunday, which is generally tied in with the Junior Chef Scholarship Awards brunch. June is our AGM. July and August will have no meetings. Instead, we will attempt to have a golf tournament, as long as we have the support of all our membership. Our Presidents' Ball is normally held in February.

Our major goal is to raise funds for the junior chefs and ensure that they are continuing to enhance their culinary education.

With best culinary regards,

Edgar Rahal
President — B.C. Chefs' Association



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OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Edgar Rahal, Senior Business Manager
Reuven International
604.825.4100 | edgar@bcchefs.com

1ST VICE PRESIDENT

Poyan Danesh, Corporate Chef
Corporate Classics Caterers
778.838.1356 | poyan@culinaryvision.ca

2ND VICE PRESIDENT

Adrian (Adi) Bernhard, Territory Manager
Canada Bread
604.363.4781 | adi.bernhard@mapleleaf.com

TREASURER

Paul Ho, CCC, Life Member
604.322.5345 | paulscho@hotmail.com

SECRETARY

Daniel Riviere, Chef Instructor
The International Culinary School
604.738.3155 | danriv@telus.net

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Anthony Munroe, Corporate Chef
Intercity Packers Ltd.
604.291.7796 ext 247 | amunroe@intercitypackers.ca

CHEF DIRECTOR

Michael Pinter, CCC, Executive Chef,
Seton Villa Action Line Housing
604.298.1279 | pinter.ml@shaw.ca

CHEF DIRECTOR

Marcus Von Albrecht, Corporate Chef
VonAlbrecht & Associates
604.251.7624 | mava@telus.net

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR


Margie Schurko, Secretary/Treasurer
BC Produce Marketing Association
604.944.0179 | info@bcpma.com

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Tim Deveau, Sales Representative
Dennett Enterprises
604.839.2700 | tdeveau@dennettenterprises.com

JUNIOR CHAPTER PRESIDENT

Carmen Mak
carmenmak.bc@gmail.com



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A MASTER CHEF

BY CHERYL MAH



Thorsten Gohl

Tobias MacDonald is a busy man these days. In addition to his duties as executive chef at La Belle Auberge, he is studying for his Master Chef certification, preparing for the WACS Global Chefs Challenge final and expecting his second child.

The 35-year-old chef won the right to represent Canada at a CCFCC national selection competition held last year in Edmonton before moving onto the Americas semi-finals. Held in Vancouver this June as part of the 2011 national conference, competitors at the semi-finals were given five hours to prepare eight three-course meals using halibut, Kobe beef and fresh strawberries. Competing against other chefs representing Chile, Ecuador, Venezuela and the U.S., Macdonald was crowned the winner.

“I was extremely happy with the food I produced in the time I did it. It was a perfect and fun day,” says MacDonald, “It felt like a really good service and to win on top of that was icing on the cake.”

Started in 2008, the Global Chefs Challenge is an international competition held every two years as part of the WACS World Culinary Congress. A chance to compete for the title of world’s best chef is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

“It’s a great honour to win the Americas and I’m looking forward to going up against the best for the grand prize,” says MacDonald, who will travel to

South Korea in May 2012 to compete in the final against six other chefs.

MacDonald is no stranger to culinary competitions. His first participation was in 1997 at B.C.’s Annual Hot Competition where he earned a bronze medal. A number of other local and national competitions would follow. In 2005, he joined Culinary Team Canada to compete in Basil at the Salon Culinaire Mondial where they received two gold medals and first place in the hot kitchen. In 2006, the team competed in Expogast in Luxembourg, winning three gold medals. MacDonald then became the team captain and went on to achieve three gold medals and one silver at the American Culinary Classic in Chicago for a second place overall finish.

Competitions have helped to push MacDonald to learn and try different things.

“Competitions are a huge learning opportunity — new methods, ingredients, techniques. I also really enjoy meeting like minded people and making new friends,” he says. “The other important thing about competition is that it’s fun.”

As coach of the Junior Culinary Team Canada (all from VCC), he will also be going to the World Culinary Olympics in Germany next year.

“The junior team will be coming to Korea to support me and they might do a competition

while they’re there,” notes MacDonald. “It’ll be good experience for them.”

B.C. chefs did well again at this year’s national conference with Montgomery Lau winning the National Chefs Challenge and Jasper Cruickshank, a second year apprentice at La Belle Auberge, finishing a respectable second for National Junior Chef.

MacDonald attributes the strong showing to the collaborative nature of chefs in B.C.

“Chefs here are very happy to share information — tips, tricks, critique. That sharing culture was started here long before me so we’re pretty lucky,” says MacDonald.

Always wanting to do better than before (whether it’s food or competitions), MacDonald is currently striving to achieve the highest culinary designation in Canada. He is enrolled in the inaugural class for the Certified Master Chef program at Toronto’s Humber College, the first and only Canadian institution to offer the certification.

Master Chef is the most sought after designation in the culinary field and previously only existed in the United States, parts of Europe and Australia.

“This program has been 10 years in the making. It will bring Canada up to the same level as other world countries,” notes MacDonald, who is already a World Certified Chef (WCC).

After 20 years working in the industry, MacDonald is modest about his achievements and credits determination for getting him to where he is today.

"I've always enjoyed cooking. I like the balance of science and art. It has enough science to keep my logical and practical side interested yet it's organic and artistic enough that it's fun," says MacDonald. "I originally thought I was going to be a chemist or physicist but I have an artistic side as well."

Born in Calgary, he grew up in Crawford Bay, a small town on the eastern shore of Kootenay Lake in the Southern Interior of B.C.

Growing up, he worked in restaurants and local golf courses (washing dishes and cooking) to make money. After high school, he went to study chemistry at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick but would eventually leave to find his true calling.

"I always thought of cooking as a way to pay my way through school. I never really thought of it as a career," says MacDonald.

Deciding to seriously pursue a cooking career, he returned to Vancouver in 1998 and did his apprenticeship under Bruno Marti at La Belle Auberge in Ladner. While working dinners at the restaurant, he also worked for a period at Scott Jaeger's Pear Tree doing lunch service.

In 2001, he moved to Switzerland for 14 months and worked at Schloss Falkenstein with Max Eichmann. "I wanted to go and see the world and learn more about cooking," recalls MacDonald.

When he returned to Vancouver, he joined La Belle Auberge as chef de cuisine, where he is now the executive chef. He has been able to hone his skills and passion for the culinary arts under Marti, a long time and well respected mentor for many of Vancouver's top chefs.

"It's been great to work with Bruno — my being here for this long is a testament to that. We operate very much like a small family business. We are a very tight knit crew," says MacDonald. "We've had some of the top names come through this kitchen. Bruno is an icon and so is this restaurant."

La Belle Auberge has earned an international reputation led by these two culinary masters. It's the top rated Zagat restaurant in Metro Vancouver and one of only four restaurants in Vancouver to be awarded the prestigious Mobil Exxon four stars.

"We're always pushing forward and trying new things. Our menu is always evolving and changes with the season. We pride ourselves on our attention to detail to make the best food possible," says MacDonald. "We serve predominantly local fresh products with classic French techniques and modern influences."

He describes good food as properly cooked and well seasoned. "That's half the battle. Having the seasoning balanced already elevates food to a different level."

Some current favourite ingredients include Thai red curry, calamansi and fish sauce.

"I like big bold flavours. I'm not so much for subtlety," he says with a laugh. "I like acidic flavours as well."

Of course, every chef has their preferred tools and equipment. For MacDonald, it's brand favourites Thermomix and Pacojet. He loves how the Pacojet is able to produce "perfectly churned ice cream every time."

Another aspect of the profession MacDonald enjoys doing is sharing his knowledge with young cooks so what would be his advice for someone contemplating a culinary career?

Be prepared.

"If you put in enough time learning your craft, no doubt you should do well. That and a bit of luck," he says. "But you have to make sure the lifestyle is for you. It requires not only a lot of time but sacrifices like working when all of your friends are going to parties or your girlfriend wants to go out for Valentine's day."

As anyone who has ever worked in a kitchen knows, a chef's work is never done. It's a challenging and sometimes daunting profession.

"The hours can certainly be challenging, especially with a young family now as I'm learning. It's been quite an adjustment for me and I'm still figuring it out," says MacDonald with a smile.

It will only become more challenging (and rewarding) next spring when his wife Yuu is due with their second child. They have a 15-month-old son Hugo. CQ



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SUSTAINING THE PROFESSION

BY CHERYL MAH



Where does this food come from? That one simple question was how Robert Clark, executive chef of C Restaurant in Vancouver, became interested in sustainability.

It was not a question many people wanted to answer in the early 90s, said Clark during his keynote speech at the CCFCC national conference this June in Vancouver.

Hosted by the CCFCC and the BC Chefs Association, the conference brought together more than 500 chefs from around the world to compete in culinary challenges, to taste Canadian cuisine and to learn from industry leaders such as Clark.

A well known advocate for sustainable seafood, Clark delivered a thought provoking and entertaining presentation on Sustainability and our Future, drawing from his experience and using examples to drive home important messages to the profession.

Although sustainability now holds a “very special place” in his heart, he acknowledges that wasn’t always the case.

“Certainly I wasn’t taught it in school and I wasn’t taught it in the first kitchens that I worked in. It wasn’t really on anyone’s radar,” he said. “Essentially what we’ve done with our food system... we’ve only screwed it up in the last 60 years. We’re just realizing the fact that how we’ve been doing things haven’t been very efficient.”

Most in attendance expected him to discuss sustainable seafood. Instead, he focused much of his speech on the sustainability of the profession.

He argued that the way food is produced and distributed today it will mean future generations of chefs won’t have the opportunity to work with food.

“We’re slowly losing a lot of our skill set,” explained Clark, noting bakers and butchers have experienced it. “Next in line is going to be chefs.”

He discussed how when he started 30 years ago, there was a full bake shop and butcher shop plus a full kitchen. Everything was done in house and everyone knew about food and had an opportunity to learn those different skills.

Students may be shown in school but there’s no longer the opportunity for them to be exposed to what older chefs experienced and that’s something that needs to be taken seriously, he said.

...the way food is produced and distributed today it will mean future generations of chefs won’t have the opportunity to work with food.

“As chefs, we’re the last generation that will have the opportunity to cook food. We will be like blacksmiths and candle makers. There will be no need for us because there won’t be any real food produced. Everything’s going to be manufactured. What we do and love is disappearing at an alarming rate,” he cautioned.

What can chefs do? He feels it’s the responsibility of chefs to make decisions that bring back those opportunities to teach the next generation and that relates directly to how food is purchased.

“How we purchase our food is bound by legislation, bound by limitations of what is offered to us in the marketplace... but in a small way here in Vancouver we’ve demonstrated with seafood how you can change that,” he said, citing B.C. spot prawns as an example. “Five years ago you wouldn’t see spot prawns anywhere — in any restaurant in Vancouver. It’s about small steps and getting support from peers. Companies want to service you. You have to demand something more than what is commonplace.”

Suppliers and legislation are not the only problems. How chefs themselves purchase food is often dictated by price first and that has decreased the quality of products.

“I was taught incorrectly that when you’re purchasing, you should try to find the best price,” he said. “Chefs have technically driven the price down on products. Therein we have actually decreased the quality of products we have available to ourselves.”

He emphasized that what drives the profession is getting “joy out of working with quality products.”

“We’re trained to find the best that we can find and make something wonderful out of it,” he said, equating quality to sustainability. “I believe the source of elevating our cuisine is elevating the quality of the products that we get to work with.”

During the question and answer period, Clark addressed several more topics including government policies that make it harder to feed ourselves, farmed salmon agriculture and buying locally grown produce.

For Clark, it doesn’t make sense to be spending petroleum and burning carbon to harvest seafood that’s going to be ground up and delivered to fish farms to feed the fish. “Salmon can feed themselves all by themselves,” he stated.

He supports importing pineapples for example because it is not grown here but is against bringing in apples, cherries and blueberries.

“The reason we have to bring these things in is partly government legislation but partly because we’ve lost the infrastructure to produce it ourselves. We can freeze them but we don’t have the capacity to can them,” he said.

Clark acknowledges challenges exist in the marketplace but ultimately believes chefs as a collective can make a difference.

“It just takes the desire — the will of our profession to actually have a fundamental impact on how food is produced, distributed and consumed,” he urged. “As a community, we have a fundamental responsibility to move all aspects of sustainability forward as far as our food is concerned. We have the ability to influence if the best possible products are available or not in the next 20 years.” CQ



HEALTH CHECK, PLEASE

BY JULIE LAU, HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION REGISTERED DIETITIAN

Canadians are hungry for a change. Health conscious consumers want to improve their eating habits and enjoy a healthier overall lifestyle. This presents a great opportunity for restaurants to step up to the plate and provide healthy options. One study noted that most chefs claim they could easily reduce the calories in their meals without the consumers even noticing. Why not give Canadians a hand in stepping in the right direction towards a healthier life?

Consider the facts: almost 60 percent of adult Canadians are overweight or obese; about 40 percent have high blood cholesterol; and one-half do not eat the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables. Improving how we eat is one of the best things we can do for our overall health, but many of us need help to fit it into our busy lifestyles and schedules.

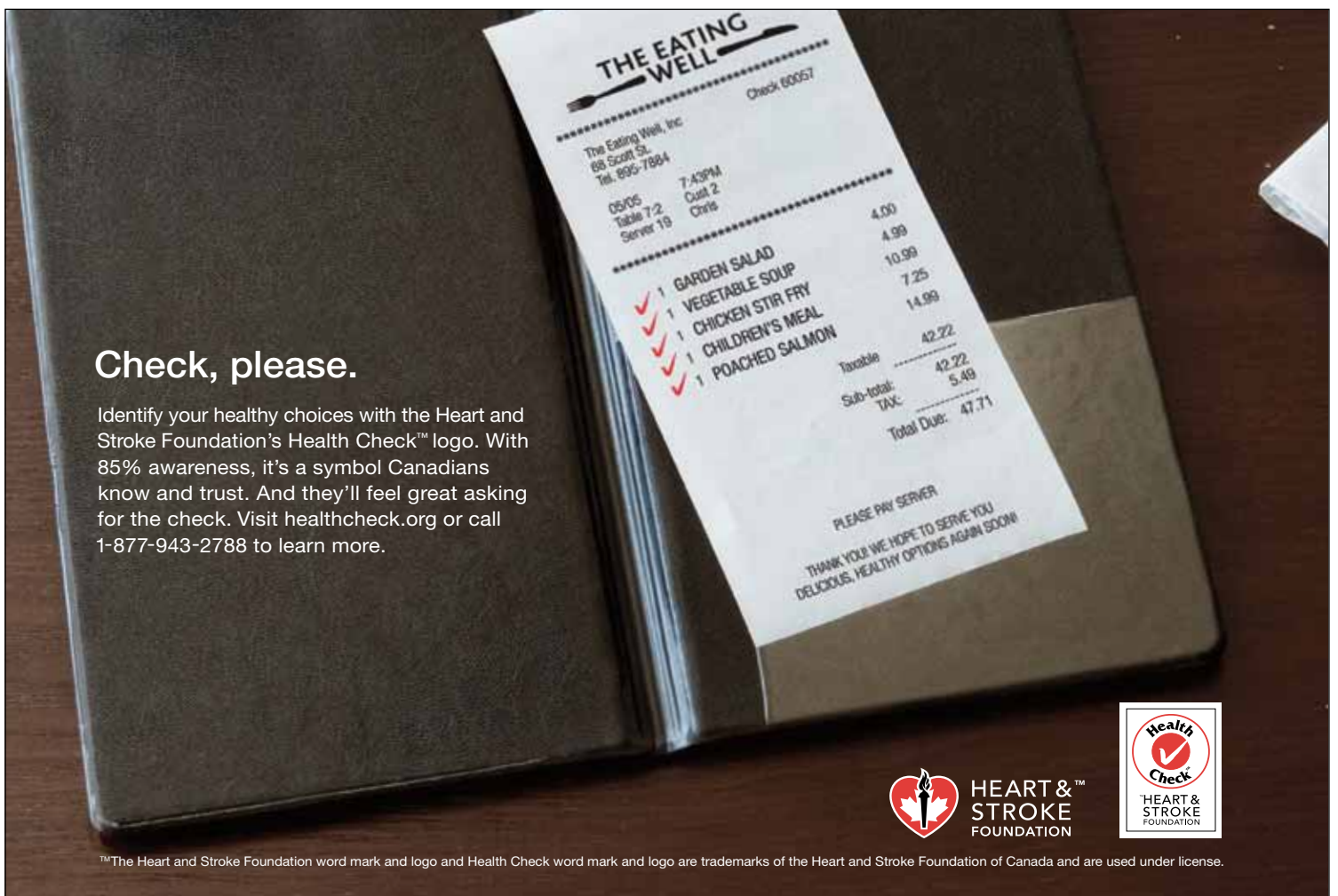
Increasingly, eating out is a regular part of life for many Canadians. One in four Canadians report eating something prepared at a fast

food restaurant on a daily basis. According to the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservice News there are almost 16 million restaurant visits each day.

With such impressive visitor rates, the restaurant and foodservice industry can play a key role in addressing its customers' appetites for healthy choices.

Canadians are trying to sort out many pieces of the nutrition puzzle. The most sought-after food nutrition information by restaurant diners includes fat, sodium, calorie count and protein. However, consumers do not want salads to be the sole healthy option; they want healthier choices in all food categories including appetizers, entrées, soups and desserts.

Refer to the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Health Check program for resources for chefs and nutrient criteria developed by the Foundation's registered dietitians at healthcheck.org.



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A SUSTAINABLE CATCH

BY FABIAN BATES



Lobster has long been a popular seafood choice for many and is used to make a variety of dishes. But traditional fishing methods known to snare North Atlantic Right Whales have kept lobster off the list of sustainable seafood, which has become an increasingly important guide for many restaurants and chefs in recent years.

More chefs than ever before don't just look for, but expect a sustainable catch, and their customers are just as demanding. A growing number of restaurants in Vancouver and other major cities across Canada serve sustainable seafood exclusively. They will not serve species that are known to be threatened by overfishing.

Many areas in which lobster traps are set on the east coast pose a threat to the Right Whale, which can become tangled in the lines and drown. Right Whales are one of the most endangered of all large whales, which reside along the east coast of Canada and the United States. Changes in fishing gear, and even seasons, may be required before fishers can be classified by Ocean Wise as sustainable.

To be labelled "sustainable" by Ocean Wise, several stringent guidelines must be met, such as limited by-catch of other, possibly threatened species,

fishing gear recommendations and the resilience of a species to withstand fishing pressure.

Recognizing the importance of being sustainable, we set out to find out how we could get our lobster catches on the Ocean Wise list about three years ago. Speaking with a marine biologist out of Boston, the Ocean Wise team at the Vancou-

While the lobster fishery as a whole must change, it is sustainable in many ways already in Canada.

ver Aquarium and different lobster fishers on the east coast, we were able to identify specific areas around Cape Breton Island that would not harm the whales.

In addition, we were able to come up with a set of regulations to be strictly adhered to by our lobster fishers. They would have to make changes to their gear (switch from a cotton rope to a lead

lined rope to make rope sink); only fish in certain areas during mating season of these whales; take traps out of the water altogether if a whale is present; present an Ocean Wise band on the lobsters claw and know the date and location that the lobster was caught.

While the lobster fishery as a whole must change, it is sustainable in many ways already in Canada. The length of a lobster season varies from area to area, for one thing, and there are relatively very few new licenses issued. It is also one of the more strictly monitored fisheries.

Through our efforts and with the changes we made, our company was named the first and only supplier of Ocean Wise lobster in Canada last year. Our supply currently runs from May until mid-December. We are working towards getting one more area approved to give us a full year round supply. CQ

Fabian Bates is owner of Sing Lobster, which has been in business since 1994 and provides sustainable lobster to dozens of Vancouver's leading restaurants. For more information, fbates@telus.net or 778.239.7464.

FOOD WASTE REDUCTION TECHNOLOGY

BY MARK MOUNTENAY



Many hotels and restaurants in B.C. are striving to be more eco-friendly and that's great because regional governments like the Capital Regional District (CRD) on Vancouver Island and Metro Vancouver, according to Port Coquitlam mayor Greg Moore, chair of Metro Vancouver's waste management committee, are introducing total waste targets and by-laws that will likely see all organic waste banned from land-fill sites in the next year or two. Why? Well, more than 3.6 million tons of total waste is generated annually in the Metro Vancouver area and of that more than 200,000 tons is food waste generated by the commercial sector alone. The target is Zero Waste but one of the challenges has been to find and implement cost-effective and eco-friendly food waste reduction with both small and large scale technology to meet this goal.

Older food waste reduction technologies simply grind the organics down to a pulp. Some machines utilize high heat to 'burn off' water, the heaviest component of most food waste to reduce costly waste hauling weight. Unfortunately 'cooking' food waste also creates an unbearable smell and utilizes a great deal of electrical energy. Furthermore, the output of the waste solids from this process is immediately unusable as compost and ironically quite toxic for vegetation due to its high acidity levels.

Food waste can also be picked up by a composting company and trucked to their facility where its decontaminated and cured over time into commercial grade compost suitable for agriculture. Composting is a great alternative to landfill but it isn't without a drawback, namely

greenhouse gas emissions in the form of methane from its anaerobic (without oxygen) process. Unless the emitted methane gas is fully captured in a formal waste to energy facility, it's actually much more harmful to the environment than the CO₂ from vehicle exhaust. To add a corrective lens to the rose-coloured optics of the current composting trend, it does not get waste hauling trucks off the road. The fuel used and emissions expended in the transport of the food waste to the compost facility, sometimes several 100 kilometres away, needs to be accounted for in any sustainability

...one of the challenges has been to find and implement cost-effective and eco-friendly food waste reduction...

effort. Smell and pest infestations from the food waste that needs to be stored until it's picked up is just the icing on that organics waste cake.

A significant alternative to anaerobic composting is 'aerobic' (with oxygen/aeration, no methane produced) technology, such as food waste to water, installed right at the source of the food waste generation in a restaurant or hotel. It's a relatively new concept to North America, however it first originated in Japan and Korea in the 90s. Decreasing landfill space and a need to

Digesters use government approved all-natural micro-organisms to convert any kind of food waste except difficult to digest items like beef bones or avocado pits, to municipally-compliant discharge water in under 24 hours.

stop waste from being thrown in the ocean there created both the government regulations and the funding to spark engineers such as Mr. Koh, a senior Korean engineer and Greentail Environmental's chief mechanical officer, who pioneered and patented several leading food waste reduction systems more than 10 years ago.

Food waste to water technology uses government approved (CEPA) all-natural micro-organisms in an electronically controlled and optimized mechanical environment that can digest, in less than 24 hours any kind of food waste such as vegetables, fruits, meats, poultry, seafood, breads and dairy products into safe, city compliant water. Discharge water effluent test results show that the system's pH, BOD and TSS levels meet municipal government water output regulations. The micro-organisms are similar to what is found in yogurt or bread yeast, and in fact, any introduction of chemicals, cleaning liquids or similar would kill them. The tea-looking effluent output simply runs down a sanitary drain through the building's grease trap and returns to the eco-system as a valuable resource. No solids are present in the digested output.

Perhaps of more significance is, for example, if just 100 units that processed 1,200 pounds per day were installed in various B.C. area hotels or large restaurants they would divert 21,900 tons of food waste from the landfill per year! That's a significant food waste reduction from the more than 200,000 tons created.

These right-at-source digester systems can be installed usually within an hour (with water, drain and electrical in place). They are easy to operate and maintain. They eliminate food waste pick-ups and reduce the ever-increasing costs of hauling, tipping fees, and ultimately this technology gets garbage trucks off the road. But with any solution, at the end of the day, it has to make economic sense. Generally, depending on the total waste management bill, pest control and labour costs, the payback for a digester system can be around two years. CQ

Mark Mountenay is the VP of marketing at Greentail Environmental Inc., a technology leader for Canada and the U.S. in wet and dry digester products and an exclusive Canadian distributor for Biohitech and BioEcoDigester™ food waste reduction systems. Contact Domingo deTorres, VP sales at Greentail Environmental Inc. for more information. www.greentail.ca

LOBSTER BISQUE, LOBSTER MEDALLIONS AND FROG LEGS

SERVES 4

4 lobster
 4 only frog legs
 100 g salted butter
 2 only leeks chopped
 100 g carrots julienne
 50 ml shallots minced
 5 ml garlic minced

50 ml Pernod
 15 ml fresh thyme
 15 ml fresh rosemary
 125 ml cream 36%
 2 lt lobster or shellfish stock
 100 ml vegetable oil
 50 g all purpose flour
 1 egg beaten
 100 ml pistachio nuts chopped

Plunge lobster in boiling water for two minutes, chill on ice, remove meat from shells, set meat aside in refrigerator, crush lobster bodies, roast in 10 ml of oil for two minutes, add roughly cut leeks, shallots and garlic and cook 5 minutes longer. Add Pernod and flambé. Add fish stock cook for an hour strain and return to heat, simmer until reduced by half, add cream and continue to reduce until desired consistency.

Heat butter to 60°C and poach lobster tails for about 5 minutes. Separate the frog legs and



dredge in flour, then egg finally roll in pistachio nuts. Shallow fry in remaining oil at medium heat.

Julienne the remaining leeks and carrots for the garnish. Saute in butter and season to taste.

Plating tips: make nests of julienne vegetable in the centre of soup plate, divide lobster onto nests and lean frog legs against, and pour the soup tableside.

BASA FILET ON VEGETABLE RAGOUT

SERVES 2

2 x 5 ounce basa filet
 2 x portebella mushroom
 2 stocks of celery
 1 stock of fennel
 1/2 cup wild rice
 1 x medium tomato, diced
 1/4 cup diced white onion
 1/2 roughly chopped purple onion
 6 tbsp butter
 1/2 cup white wine
 1 1/2 cup fish stock
 rock salt to taste
 1 orange, squeeze the juice
 1 x lemon
 1 x clove garlic crushed
 pinch oregano, basil and rosemary

Melt the butter in a sauce pan and set aside, squeeze the juice from the orange and lemon, place into separate containers and set aside. Take a micro planer and zest the skin of the orange and lemon.

Dice white onion and sautee in sauce pan, add wild rice, stir for a few minutes and then add fish stock. Bring to boil and then lid and simmer for 25 minutes or until rice is cooked. In another pot, place 3 tbsp olive oil, crush gar-



lic and purple onions over med high heat and add tomato, rosemary, basil and oregano. Bring to boil, add additional olive oil should you see it needs it. Reduce heat and cook for 10 minutes, set aside.

Slice fennel, brush with melted butter, fresh orange juice and season with rock salt. Take mushroom, remove center stem, brush with butter, lemon juice, rock salt. Place both fennel and mushroom onto a cookie sheet and place under broiler

for about 5 minutes or until lightly browned. Use remaining butter in frying pan, heat and add basa and zest. Cook for 2 minutes, turn over and cook for additional two minutes. Add any additional lemon and orange juice to frying pan at this time. Season with rock salt.

For assemble. Place mushroom on your plate. Top with braised fennel, add raguot and then top with fish. Drizzle juices from pan used to fry fish, over the top and serve.

GRILLED NORTH COAST SNAPPER ARTICHOKE AND SUN-DRIED MOROCCAN OLIVES WITH SAFFRON PAN JUS

1 large whole snapper head on
1 carrot
1 rib celery
1 onion
1 tsp tomato paste
1 large pinch saffron
200 ml noilly pratt white vermouth
30 ml pernod
750 ml fish stock

2 artichokes
1 dozen Moroccan sundried olives
1 lemon
1 lb green beans
2 Yukon gold potatoes

Scale snapper, de-bone fillets carefully, portion each fillet into two, score skin side to keep from curling when cooking, set aside.

Remove gills and guts from fish bones, rinse bones lightly, chop bones with French knife, and cube mirepoix (carrot, onion, celery).

In hot skillet, sauté fish bones in olive oil until browned evenly, add mirepoix, sauté until brown. Add tomato pates and saffron, deglaze with liquor and fish stock, reduce until about 1 cup liquid remains, strain, season and serve.



Using a paring knife, trim artichoke stem and remove 2/3 outer leaves, pluck choke and scrape heart. Squeeze with lemon juice to avoid discoloration, place into acidulated water and braise slowly until tender, approx 20 mins. Remove and set aside.

TO ARRANGE Heat grill pan until lightly smoking, pat dry snapper, season, and lightly oil.

Grill skin side down, finish in 325°F oven. In large bowl, ladle equal amounts saffron fish reduction. Place one piece artichoke, and steamed potato slice down, top with grilled snapper, arrange some green beans around and sprinkle with Moroccan olives and olive oil.

WINE SUGGESTION Pinot Grigio, Jackson Triggs.

MOCHA MILLEFEUILLES

SERVES 4

206 ml vanilla custard
2 tbsp mocha paste
1/3 cup sugar
410 ml whipping cream
6 cups fine chocolate

VANILLA CUSTARD

1 ltr milk
½ cup sugar
4 egg yolk
1/3 cup butter
3/4 cup vanilla custard powder

In a double boiler, combine all ingredients and slowly bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Once it boils, remove from heat.

MOCHA CREAM

Combine mocha paste, sugar and cream. Whip until firm. Add to vanilla custard.

CHOCOLATE COOKIE

Melt half of the chocolate in a double boiler. Finely chop the other half of the chocolate and add to mixture and dissolve without the product being in a double boiler. Stir until all the chocolate is melted. Pour onto a silicon sheet, spread with a spreader. After it sets, cut into three pieces of desired shape.



TO ASSEMBLE

12 pieces of chocolate.
Place chocolate on bottom. Pipe on the mocha cream mixture, top with a chocolate piece, more mocha cream mixture and top with a chocolate

piece. Garnish with a small amount of mocha cream mixture and a coffee bean.

WINE SUGGESTION Cowichan Valley Blackberry Port, Cherry Point Vineyards.

KITCHEN INNOVATION

BY DWAYNE BOTCHAR

Innovation is happening so quickly now that it can be difficult to keep up with what is of real value and what is just gimmick. Here are some insights as to what is real, cool and what will save you money in the long (and short) run.

One of the first real innovations to come into the kitchen was the **combi steamer**. This production workhorse revolutionized the industry by being two things in one. You had a steamer and a convection oven in one. But that wasn't the real breakthrough; the real breakthrough was the fact that we were now cooking with thermal dynamics in a controlled environment. We could manipulate the cooking process fully. What this gains us is higher yields and faster cooking times. Now combi's are fully automatic and a few can even learn the product size and volume they are cooking!

Banqueting has taken a turn as well and combi's are playing an important role there too. What used to be called retherming has taken a whole new turn as we can "retherm" food on the plates and have it look like it was just done. And in fact it is much better than traditional methods as our banquet food doesn't have to be plated hot in advance then sit in warmers for up to an hour. Combi's can produce up to 120 plates every 10 minutes per machine. Imagine that — you can serve a banquet of 1,000 in under 40 minutes with every plate looking exactly the same and the food perfectly cooked.

Executive chef Doug Mordon from the Ottawa Convention Centre was quoted as saying, "In the past you would normally sear the protein (meat) and cook it at the last minute, then it gets plated hot and put into a warmer where it potentially sits and overcooks. Combi's allow you to take it to the point you want and then flash-finished with steam injection, then circulating fans that brings the food back to the point where you've got the exact same product as you would have if it was plated piping hot. In this case, you can plate it cold and finish it off. One rack of plates takes just eight minutes per cycle ... so all we need is eight minutes notice."

Immersion circulators have been around for a while, but mostly in laboratories. They became popular in the kitchen when sous vide cooking started to take hold. With the popularity of sous vide came some chef's wild idea to try cooking foods slowly and infusing flavours. A standard thermal immersion circulator consists of a heating coil with an attached pump. The heating coil and pump are inserted into a body of water and a temperature is set on the immersion circulator. The heating coil will keep the water at the set temperature while the pump circulates the water eliminating any hot or cold spots. The biggest benefit of thermal immersion circulators is their

precision. Depending on the type of circulator you get, they can regulate the heat from within one degree celsius to within .01 degree, both of which are more than acceptable for perfect sous vide cooking.

Vacuum sealing or sous vide is another great innovation. By removing oxygen from the packaging, we have the ability to give food products a longer shelf life. This is really dollars in the bank! If the food was raw, it doubled the shelf life; if cooked you could easily get four weeks on the shelf. In the freezer, you were pretty much guaranteed to be able to sell the product or use it before it went bad. Chef Mike Dekker of Rouge in Calgary says, "Sous vide cooking has become another fundamental in cooking that every chef needs to embrace; a natural step from searing, poaching and braising."

On the other side of the kitchen, we now have equipment that biodegrades food waste in our kitchens overnight and just runs out the drain as water. As well, we have machines that

eliminate the need for pot scrubbing and scouring. You soak the pans and pots in the tub and with heat and biodegradable chemicals your pans come out looking brand new. We even have ionators which ionize the water — imagine that no chemicals are needed to clean your stainless counter tops and appliances.

Whatever the change or innovation in technology, it can be difficult as a chef to come to terms with the speed of that change. That said it's important to be able to make the adaption if we want to stay successful AND stay in business. With the costs of operating a food operation continuously going up, innovation and technology is in many cases the answer to controlling those costs. As well, innovating your menu keeps you current and in the spotlight; and as chefs, we all want to be in the spotlight. *CQ*

Dwayne Botcher is executive chef and regional sales manager, Western Canada, for Rational Canada.



ALL ABOUT MUSHROOMS

BY JOE SALVO



The humble mushroom. The butt of jokes like, “Why do they keep us in the dark and feed us crap?” Its reputation tarnished by tales of poisonings and mind-altering psychedelic trips. Its character sullied by the hookah-smoking caterpillar in *Alice in Wonderland*. But what is the truth about these misunderstood fungi?

The mushroom is the fruiting body of huge underground “trees” of mycelium, some as large as the 2,400-acre site in eastern Oregon. It is widely believed that this “tree” is 2,200 years old, and is the largest organism in the world.

That’s pretty impressive for a fun-guy.

Recently, the mushroom has gained huge popularity in foodie circles, largely due to mushroom-loving chefs. The Food Network has been instrumental in bringing these fabulous fungi from a gourmet luxury, to a mainstream staple. They compliment any dish with their earthy richness, add texture, flavour and healthfulness to any meal, and are a great alternative to meat.

If your family is from Europe, then your grandmother likely took you into the forest and taught you to forage for chanterelle, morel, porcini, black trumpet and many other wild mushrooms. She brought you home and made you a wonderful dish of creamed morels on toast, a chanterelle omelet, or a lovely bowl of porcini mushroom soup.

Fall is a fantastic time for mushroom hunters, and there are guided forages available from local mycological groups in most areas (www.fungi.ca/mycogroups.htm). At this time of year, you can find chanterelle, lobster, hedgehog, cauliflower, blue cluster, chicken-of-the-woods, porcini, and the illusive pine mushroom, or “matsutake” so

highly prized by the Japanese. Often given as gifts, the matsutake symbolizes virility, good fortune, fertility and happiness.

Popular during the Thanksgiving and Christmas season, the chanterelle is enjoyed in stuffings, as a side dish, and in sauces and soups. Their bright orange colour and nutty, apricot flavour make them ideal for holiday dishes.

Spring brings the revered morel mushroom, erupting from the charred earth following last summer’s forest fires. Hollow and spongy-looking, these smoky, woody-flavoured morsels crunch deliciously, even when cooked in a sauce! In India and

Recently, the mushroom has gained huge popularity...largely due to mushroom loving chefs.

Pakistan, they are strung together in a kind of necklace and hung over dung fires to dry... a source of income for the women in these poor regions.

The lobster mushroom is an interesting fellow. It starts its life as an unpalatable white russula mushroom, and then upon being attacked by a parasitic fungus which turns it a reddish-orange, it becomes a tasty treat. Like its name suggests, it has a seafood-like aroma, appearance and flavour when cooked.

One thing that wild mushrooms have in common with their cultivated cousins is their many



health benefits. High in vitamin D and anti-oxidants, low in fat and calories, and rich in cancer-fighting agents, the mushroom is arguably in the top 10 “super foods” today. One of the most important of these medicinal marvels is the Shiitake, which contains a natural compound called Lentinan, known to slow or stop the growth of tumors, lower blood pressure and cholesterol, and to lessen the side effects of cancer treatment. It doesn’t hurt that they are also among the most delicious and versatile of the mushroom family.

Nothing sends food lovers into raptures like the aroma of truffles. White truffles from Northern Italy are available for only a short time each year, and many devoted truffle enthusiasts make the journey to Alba for the Annual Truffle Festival each October. These buried treasures have been hunted by domestic pigs since the time of the Roman Empire, and more recently by trained dogs, who are less likely to EAT the truffle. Black winter, burgundy and summer truffles are all uniquely aromatic and less expensive. Himalayan and Oregon truffles are beginning to gain popularity as well.

They say good things come in small packages, and the humble mushroom is proof of this! **CQ**

Joe Salvo is owner and president of Ponderosa Mushrooms, based in Vancouver. Ponderosa serves its many mushroom enthusiasts with a wide variety of high quality fresh, dried and IQF frozen wild and exotic mushrooms, truffles and truffle products. Ponderosa is the preferred supplier for an ever-growing number of restaurants, hotels and retailers.

2011 GRAND PRIX NEW PRODUCT WINNERS

The annual Grand Prix New Product Awards recognize top newcomers in 26 food and non-food product categories. The top winner was mini hors-d'oeuvre from La Fromagerie. Here are the winners in the food category.



SNACK
IN GOODS INC.
In Snax Pita Crisps



BAKING NEEDS
UNILEVER CANADA
Becel pro.activ



DESSERT
LEBEL FOODS INC.
Probiotic Frozen Yogurt Mini Cone



DAIRY PRODUCTS
LA FROMAGERIE 1860 DU VILLAGE
Mini Hors-doeuvre



BAKERY
CANADA BREAD COMPANY LIMITED
Dempster's OvenFresh



FROZEN OR REFRIGERATED PREPARED FOOD & ENTREES
GARDEN PROTEIN INTERNATIONAL
garden™



CONFECTIONERY
CADBURY
Trident Layers



BEVERAGES
SMUCKER FOODS OF CANADA CORP.
Folgers Black Silk Coffee



FRUITS, VEGETABLES & PRODUCE
SMUCKER FOODS OF CANADA CORP.
Europe's Best Antioxidant Fruit Blend



CONDIMENTS & SAUCES
KRAFT CANADA INC.
Kraft Whipped Peanut Butter & Dip



DELI, EGG, MEAT & SEAFOOD
MAPLE LEAF FOODS
Maple Leaf Natural Selections Deli Meats



SHELF STABLE PREPARED FOOD & ENTREES
UNILEVER CANADA
Knorr Homestyle Stock

TOP QUALITY SMOOTHIES

BY JIM ZALUSKY

If you haven't seen the "Will it Blend" video on YouTube or Good Morning America, you need to. Far too many operators continue to try to sell \$4.90 smoothies out of a blender that costs \$49. It does not work!

Today's consumers are international travelers, and they know a top quality smoothie from a less expensive one. Real fruit smoothies are made from — guess what — real fruit. Who has not yet frequented Booster Juice, Jugo Juice, Mega Wraps or Jamba Juice and seen the line-ups of customers morning (breakfast smoothies made with oatmeal), noon (as a liquid meal replacement) and night (popular nightclubs now serving real fruit daiquiris)?

Most operators today use a combination of fresh or frozen fruit, high quality fruit purees, flavoured syrups or espresso and add yogurt, milk, soy or protein powder for texture. Industry statistics show that 40 per cent of blender drinks sold are coffee-based frappes, obviously skewed by Starbucks' success.

The three leading blender companies to explore are Blendtec, Hamilton Beach and Vitamix. Check out some of the latest features these companies offer, including USB ports for customized blend cycles, in-counter models for noise reduction, three HP motors, stackable jars, cavitation sensors and ice shavers.

When sourcing a smoothie mix, look carefully at the ingredient statement.

TRAIN YOUR STAFF

Many operators who serve high quality smoothies fail to train their staff on the differences between the smoothies they sell and the "slushies" that are sold at the convenience store across the street. One is made from high fructose corn syrup and artificial flavours and sells for \$1.99 for 24 oz, while the high quality smoothie sells for \$4.50 and is 14 oz, but both look the same at first glance. Train your staff to know and be able to explain the difference.

GARNISH FOR SUCCESS

If it's made from real fruit, garnish with real fruit. Garnish with coloured, flavoured real whipped cream. Add a dash of cinnamon sugar or nutmeg sugar. Remember, customers first buy with their eyes. It has to look good and yell out high quality, if you are charging a premium price.

GET THE RIGHT MIX

When sourcing a smoothie mix, look carefully at the ingredient statement. You usually get what you pay for. Look for the mixing or reconstitution instructions. Is it a one part water to one part mix ratio, or is it a four-to-one ratio? The higher the mix ratio, the more labour is involved, and the more errors can be made with your staff when making drinks. The lower the mix ratio, the less labour involved and fewer mistakes made, but the higher the cost per finished ounce. Ask your suppliers if they provide equipment assistance programs, training and free point-of-sale materials (i.e. banners, posters, table tents, counter cards).

KNOW YOUR COSTS

One of the biggest mistakes operators make is not to know their actual costs. Remember, you are in business to make money. Most operators need to balance serving the highest quality products available with what sells. I used to teach marketing and sales management, and it always amazed me how few of the students knew what the

equation was for profit. My definition is the margin per drink times the number of drinks sold. In other words, you need to know the variable costs of every ingredient of your drink, including cups, lids, straws, garnish, spoils, etc. The margin is the difference between your actual costs and the price you charge. Profit is generated in the number of drinks you sell. Higher cost drinks don't necessarily mean higher sales, and lower priced drinks don't necessarily result in more sales... Know what your customers want and what prices they will tolerate.

To be an effective purveyor of smoothies you need to blend (no pun intended) production efficiencies (making good quality drinks consistently and quickly) with marketing, sales (conveying your differences to your staff and customers) and accounting skills (knowing your costs and profits) CQ.

Jim Zalusky is regional manager for Kerry Food and Beverage for Western Canada. Contact him at jim.zalusky@kerry.com



BCCA AWARDS

The annual BCCA Awards were held in June in conjunction with the CCFCC national conference in Vancouver. The awards were handed out at the Tastes of CCFCC Canada welcome reception. The reception, at the Renaissance Vancouver Hotel Harbourside, featured food and beverage stations, each representing unforgettable provincial cuisine.

Chef of the Year honours went to Boban Kovachevich, executive corporate chef at the Executive Hotel and Conference Centre.

Originally from Belgrade-Serbia, Kovachevich moved to Canada in 1998 and started at the Executive Hotel Burnaby as sous chef. His talent then earned him an executive chef position for the same hotel at the Vancouver location until 2003. In 2007 he assumed his current position and is responsible for the planning and inventing of the various menus for the company's restaurants, conferences and banquets.

"I am extremely grateful for all the support from my Executive Hotel team members and fellow members of BCCA. I could never have done it without them," he said. CQ



BCCA AWARD WINNERS

A) CHEF OF THE YEAR: Boban Kovachevich, executive corporate chef, Executive Hotel & Resorts Centre

B) FRED NASO AWARD: Arlene Keis, CEO, go2

C) JULIUS POKOMANDY AWARD: Dwayne Botchar, executive chef, Rational Canada Poyan Danesh, corporate chef, Corporate Classics Caterers

D) CITATION OF THE YEAR: Paul Ho, life member

E) ASSOCIATE OF THE YEAR: Anthony Munroe, Intercity Packers

10 PRESIDENT'S APPRECIATION AWARDS

were also handed out: Kevin Greehy, Clarence Ma, Jon Thompson, Marcus Von Albrecht, Tim Deveau, Margie Schurko, John Cloutier, J.C. Felicella and Edgar Rahal.



NATIONAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

PHOTOS THORSTEN GOHL

The Canadian Culinary Federation's national convention was held in Vancouver this June. Hosted by BCCA, more than 500 chefs from around the world gathered to attend seminars, network and taste the best of Canadian cuisine and to compete.

B.C. chefs did well again at this year's national conference competitions with Montgomery Lau winning the National Chefs Challenge and Jasper Cruickshank, a second year apprentice at La Belle Auberge, finishing a respectable second for National Junior Chef.

For the first time the Hans Bueschekens Junior Chefs Challenge semi-finals and the Global Chefs Challenge Americas semi-finals were held in Canada during the conference.

La Belle Auberge executive chef Tobias MacDonald, representing Canada, was crowned the winner of the Americas semi-finals and now moves onto the finals in South Korea next year.

The CCFCC 2012 national conference will be held in Halifax.







BEST OF WEST

The annual Best of the West Competition was held at the Vancouver Convention Centre downtown. Each team consisted of three cooks and one server. Congratulations to the winning team from Delta Burnaby Hotel. Team members were John Chang, Keith Pears, Danica Namocatcat and Shanna Ridley (server).

COR MANAGER

Michael Guzmicky is the new go2 program manager, Certificate of Recognition (COR). In his new role, he is responsible for managing the COR Program for tourism and hospitality operators, supporting them in completing the registration and certification process, and providing technical health and safety expertise to the industry.

In partnership with WorkSafeBC, go2 launched the COR program for tourism and hospitality businesses in October 2010. COR-certified companies can earn a rebate of up to 15 per cent on their WorkSafeBC premiums by demonstrating that their health and safety programs go beyond the legal requirements through taking a best practice approach.

HAMID MOVES TO DIVA

Chef Hamid Salimian has re-joined the Metropolitan Hotel Vancouver in the role of executive chef. Known for his contemporary, creative approach to cuisine, chef Salimian will be heading the hotel's kitchen team, taking on the leadership of the property's entire culinary program, including Diva at the Met restaurant, banquets, room service and off-site catering. He spent five years at Diva at the Met earlier in his career, learning from and training under some of the esteemed chefs that have called the Metropolitan Hotel Vancouver home, including Chris Mills, Scott Baechler, Ray Henry and Thomas Haas. Chef Salimian has worked in some of British Columbia's most highly regarded kitchens, starting with his apprenticeship at Vancouver's Sutton Place Hotel, where he was named Apprentice of the Year in 2002. He was also executive sous chef at The Westin Bear Mountain Victoria, and most recently was the opening executive chef at the Westin Wall Centre, Richmond.

BEST TRUFFLE

Vancouver based Purdy's Chocolates' head chocolatier, Gary Mitchell won for Best Truffle in the Professional Baking Competition at the 2011 Canada's Baking and Sweets Show. The competition was judged by a celebrity guest panel at the International Centre in Mississauga.

His winning entry was a Savory Brie Cheese and Fig Truffle, a recipe he has been developing for over a year. The truffle is crafted with triple Cream Brie Cheese, fresh basil and lemon zest and topped with fig. It is then hand dipped in a blend of three different dark chocolates and adorned with a cocoa butter transfer.



CHEESE

Louis d'Or made by Fromagerie du Presbyterie in Sainte-Elizabeth-de-Warwick, Quebec, has been selected as the "Grand Champion" of this year's event. A seven-member jury made up of Canada's leading cheese experts selected the Grand Champion from among 17 category winners, which were also announced at the Gala. The Canadian Cheese Grand Prix, organized by Dairy Farmers of Canada, is the most prestigious cheese competition in Canada. Held every two years, it showcases the outstanding quality, variety, taste and versatility of Canadian cheese made from 100 % Canadian cow's milk.

B.C. PLACE CHEF

Ryan Stone is the new executive chef at the newly renovated B.C. Place. An experienced and talented chef, his culinary achievements will bring a new dimension to the venue's quick-serve, club, suite and catering offerings.

Chef Stone brings more than 15 years of experience to Centerplate and B.C. Place. Formally trained as an apprentice at the Pear Tree in Burnaby, it wasn't long before Stone was named executive chef of the world-famous, five-star West Coast Fishing Club Lodge. He is also known for his strong performance in culinary competitions; most notably, this past January when he represented Canada against 24 countries at the Bocuse d'Or.

Chef Stone is recognized in Vancouver's culinary scene for his passion and artistic culinary expression.

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BC WINE AWARDS

Four top winners were honoured at the BC Wine Awards 2011 during the Okanagan Fall Wine Festival. Gold, silver and bronze winners were also selected.

Best White Wine: Summerhill Pyramid Organic Winery Riesling

Best Red Wine: Red Rooster Winery Reserve Syrah

Best Dessert Wine: Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate Proprietors' Grand Reserve Riesling Icewine

Best New Winery: Volcanic Hills Estate Winery



FEENIE TAKES GOLD

Chef Rob Feenie of Cactus Club Restaurants took home the gold medal at the Vancouver 2011 Gold Medal Plates competition held at The Westin Bayshore. Chef Feenie went head-to-head with 10 of British Columbia's finest culinary masters at the prestigious culinary competition and will go on to compete at the Canadian Culinary Championships, the Gold Medal Plates Finale, in Kelowna on February 10th and 11th, 2012.

His dish of Rabbit Leg Confit, Applewood Smoked Bacon, Chestnut, Veal Tongue and Porcini Ragout and Brown Butter Squash Purée barely beat out chef Dale MacKay of Ensemble Restaurant's BC Spot Prawns with Pork Thai Broth and Bok Choy. This was MacKay's third consecutive silver medal. Feenie previously won in 2009.

Taking the bronze medal was Chef Joël Watanabe of Bao Bei Chinese Brasserie, whose dish was Pork Belly with Poached Asian Pear, Superior Stock Gelée, Buckwheat Honey and Soy Reduction.



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