

THE BOUQUET GARNI

NEWSLETTER OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA CULINARY ARTS SPECIALIST ASSOCIATION

President's Message



Happy New Year!! I hope that everyone was able to enjoy some relaxing down time during the recent break which at this point, already feels like a distant memory. I spent the solitary Christmas break doing some much-needed touch ups and maintenance around the house. I also made time for family outdoor activities and of course some down time.

As we move into a (hopefully) better 2021, we are still left with a lot of questions and unknowns of how we operate both in our private and professional lives. Specifically questions about the delivery of our Culinary Arts curriculum in the fall. Will we be well on our way out of this pandemic? Will we have relaxed guidelines? What will school schedules look like? While we will not have these answers anytime soon, what I do know is that we have all proven that we are very resilient, creative and capable to deliver the curriculum regardless of any challenge thrown our way. I also believe that this year's forced cohorts have opened up a lot of ideas and options for many teachers when it comes to school schedules and class composition. This of course brings forth more questions and unknowns. Do we like our current quarter system? Do we want to move to a semester system? Should we go linier? Do we flip blocks? How will classes flip? While all options have their ups and downs, the decision ultimately needs to be based on what system and make up promotes the most student success. I have had some great conversations with so many BCCASA members over this. Many are experiencing some positive experiences with this year's system, others have not. I hope to continue to hear your thoughts and opinions regarding your current schedules and policies and how they have affected your class, teaching and student success.

One question still up in the air that directly effects BCCASA is regarding the October 2021 conference and AGM. Are we going to be allowed to meet in October face to face for our 2021 conference or will we be forced to come up with a virtual solution again? My hope is that we can all be together in October but there is still a "wait and see" message from the BCTF Executive. As with everything over the past ten months, changes can only be made if transmission numbers drop due to good practices and of course the vaccine. We as an Executive will keep you up to date as any information and BCTF decisions that come our way.

Last, there has been some positive development in the push to have multiple culinary arts course codes reinstated into the provincial course code system. Long story short, we will be getting our multiple course codes back, but the Ministry does recognise that there may be other curriculums that need the same change and would like to make any course adjustments all at once. The Ministry has asked the BCTF to collect feedback from other PSA Presidents in regard to any changes to codes. Once this information is gathered, we will have our multiple codes available for our students. My hope is that this will happen before course selections this year but that is still to be determined. I am positive that this will happen before September.



I look forward to the time when we will be able to collaborate and share experiences in person. Until then, thank you for all of your tireless work keeping the culinary arts classes alive and successful through these very turbulent times. Stay safe and please continue to email me or call with your thoughts, opinions and questions. I enjoy hearing from everyone and truly believe that this interaction is what makes our PSA so strong.

All the best and stay safe,

Trevor

A Note from the Editor:



Let's be honest, it's been a tough and very usual year both personally and professionally. I feel I was fairly lucky last year. Sure it's been tough not to see friends, extended family and colleagues, but I have a roof over my head, I had lots of time to cook and create in my kitchen, my family bonds have never been stronger, and my job continued despite staying home for six months. Here's hoping we all have a smooth transition out of this thing and that we never have to go to redundant school meetings ever again.

I'd also like to say thank you for your submission and thoughts. Keep them coming! I initially thought we didn't get many replies on the survey we created in October, but when I checked a few weeks ago I was surprised to see 15 responses!

I really believe that Bouquet Garni should be representative of us all, not just a voice of the Executive or of yours truly. We live in a diverse province, and each of us approach of teaching kitchens with passion and a variety of perspectives. We'll have the next edition near the end of the school year. Feel free to send me anything you like, photos, a paragraph or even just an idea for an article, everything helps.

Take care beautiful people,
Stephen Schram
BCCulinaryArtsSpecialists@gmail.com

Do You Even GRAM?



Instagram isn't just for the kids we teach; it can be a powerful tool for chef teachers to communicate, promote, and create a buzz about our classrooms and the food that our students create. If you don't have an account, setting up one is easy, and if you do, check out these inspiring teachers!

@burnabyculinaryarts

BCSS Train-in-Trades Cooks

Learning the life of flippers, grillers, bakers, cake makers, food testers, mixers, cutters, & slicers.

Check out what Chef Stephen Schram and his gang of culinary padawans are doing at Burnaby Central Secondary while they navigate the curriculum of Train In Trades Cooks.



@culinaryrebelsgss

Garibaldi Secondary Culinary Arts. Using our passion for food to support all learners in becoming respectful and responsible members of society.

From the Fraser Valley culinary hot spot of Maple Ridge, check out Chef Brent McGimpsey and his team of students as they create some delicious looking dished in one the the most beautiful areas of the Lower mainland.



@ravenouscafe

The official Instagram account for Royal Bay Secondary School's Ravenous Cafe. Just a teacher from Alberta pretending he's from BC...

Interested in what happens on Vancouver Island? Chef Rowan Bezeau runs a unique program at the newly built Royal Bay Secondary. A real highlight are the many hilarious videos Chef Rowan made while on pandemic lockdown last year from his parent's farm in Alberta



BCCASA Conference 2020 Recap

ONLINE EDITION

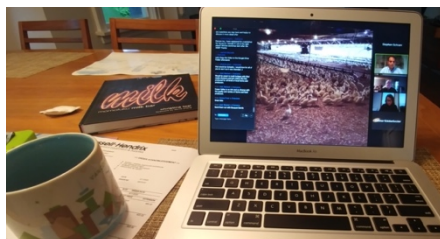
COVID-19 PANDEMIC



I'm not sure if you heard anything about it, but there's a worldwide pandemic happening. As a result our usual fun filled weekend was cancelled this year. In lieu, we held an online conference that was filled with lots of info and a few very entertaining educational sessions.

At 9am we kicked off with our Annual General Meeting. We saw through our usual business, ratified our budget, had few side discussions, and saw to new business. Best of all the coffee was unlimited from the comfort of home. Anyone else have Irish coffee? ...no, just me then...

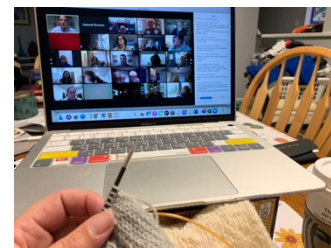
Our first presenter was Johanne Dyck from Fraser Valley Specialty Poultry. We had an excellent online video tour of their



entire operation. The size and scale of the farm was immense, so many ducks! Once again it was great to see people who are passionate about what they do, showing us a glimpse of their day-to-day life. The kicker was a gift certificate for an online poultry purchase, with free delivery. If you still haven't used it, get on it! I ordered duck breast, a whole chicken, duck pepperoni, and a smoked Peking Duck over the Christmas break. Everything was excellent, I'll be ordering again.

After the tour we were greeted by Chef Brian Beasley, for a cooking demo featuring BC duck live from his home kitchen. He highlighted the reasons to choose local product, showing his deft culinary skills. If only smell-a-

vision were a thing, because his food looked delish! Can you maybe get working on that Elon Musk? Check more on Chef Brian on Instagram @hi_def_chef



Finally, Reece Sims from Lavish Liquid demonstrated for us the techniques behind a variety of cocktails. A few of us played the home version, mixing along with variety of liquors, liqueurs and liquids.

Now over to roving reporter, Meghan Dehghan for her report on the cocktail hour!

"The Bar Cart by Lavish Liquids was a much-anticipated part of the BCCASA conference by many. The executive tried to plan a conference that mirrored the elements of more traditional conferences of the past. One of the aspects that we tried to bring home was the social aspects we all enjoy so much. Lavish liquids sent participants a long list of ingredients and recipes for some delicious cocktails. There were three different cocktails each with their own unique techniques and flavourings.

The first was *Butter Me Up, Sam*. The unique part of this cocktail was the fat washed rum, a new technique to many of us, that was originally developed by the perfume industry. The recipe called for browning of butter and then allowing the warm brown butter and rum steep



at room temperature overnight to allow the flavours from the butter to infuse into the rum. The butter was saved for another use, with the remaining rum acquiring a warm and complex flavour for the resulting cocktail. The *Butter Me Up, Sam* cocktail was bright and flavorful with its lime and pineapple juice, yet warm and complex with the infused rum and Aperol. I have to admit that this is now in my regular rotation at cocktail hour in my house.

The *High Tea* cocktail called for some interesting ingredients as well, namely the purple hued Gin. This Gin is infused with the purple pigment from the Butterfly Pea Blossom. This anthocyanin pigment is a natural antioxidant, and has many health benefits, at least that is what I keep telling myself as I sipped on this delicious creation. What was so remarkable about this concoction was that the purple hue is also a pH indicator and will change colour when in the presence of an acid. This



drink was layered with blackberry honey, hibiscus tea and lemon juice. But the real magic happened when the bottom pink layer mixed with the deep purple top layer to create a bright red final result. This was another hit at my house. I have recreated this drink many times since the conference as well.

The third and most showy cocktail was the *Smoke + Mirrors*. This called for two more common ingredients bourbon and mezcal, and a third more unusual Cynar. Bourbon is an American whiskey distilled spirit made from a grain bill of at least 50% corn. Mezcal is a spirit distilled in Mexico from agave. We learned that tequila is from a specific growing region in Mexico, while mezcal is a very similar product from elsewhere in Mexico and typically



boasts a smoky aftertaste. Cynar is an Italian bitter liqueur, flavoured with 13 herbs and spices the most predominant is artichoke. This proved hard to locate in my area of the Lower Mainland. Which had me talking to some very helpful employees at my local BC Signature Liquor Store and coming up with an alternative in Benedictine, Aperol, or Campari. This also called for smoke bitters which were again difficult to find. This cocktail also included using a blowtorch to char a plank of your favourite hardwood, placing your glass over and allowing the glass to fill with smoke. When the shaken concoction was ready, quickly flipping over the smoke-filled glass and pouring your drink. Personally I really like bourbon cocktails and I also like tequila or mezcal cocktails, but for me I would like to keep them separate. I think that this cocktail was better when I used only Bourbon. I felt that the smoky taste and aroma was great with the sweetness of the apricot syrup and bourbon alone.



At the end of the day I had a great experience with the Lavish Liquid team, and the creative drinks that they came up with. I think that my experience as a chef allowed me to adapt, change and make substitutions. It is a pandemic and finding a rare Italian liquor would have been great but did not take from the experience. I really enjoyed learning about new types of liquors and even when they were hard to find coming up with creative solutions.”

-Meghan Dehghan

Although meeting in person is always more engaging, the Executive hopes everyone had fun and learned a few new tricks this year. We truly hope to see you (in person) in October.

by Stephen Schram

WHAT'S GOING ON

...around British Columbia

New Westminster Secondary – Winter Update by David Johnson

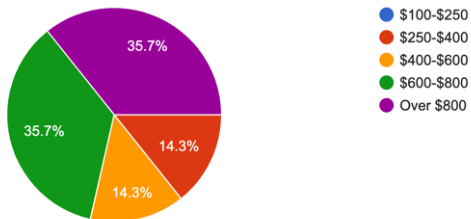


We had big changes at New Westminster Secondary this winter. To make this extraordinary year even more unusual, we moved to our new building over the winter break and now have a shiny new kitchen with lots of fancy equipment. Food service shut down in early December because we had to move all our equipment to the new location, but we started doing food service again in mid-January. Sales have improved dramatically, mostly due to the location of the café. We are now right at the center of the school across from the main entrance. We are serving all food intake out containers and have lots of plexiglass and hand sanitizer. Our apprenticeship students start next week, and they are thrilled to be in the new kitchen.

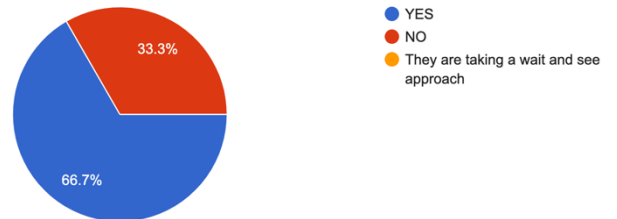
SURVEY RESULTS

in October we asked a series of questions to get a sense of what was going on around the Province at the time. Each District seemed to be responding to the covid-19 outbreak with differing responses and this in turn affected how to run our business within the school.

Based on years previous, how much volume do you typically make in a day?
14 responses

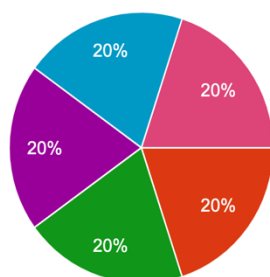


Has your District allowed you to open this year?
15 responses



If NO, why?

5 responses



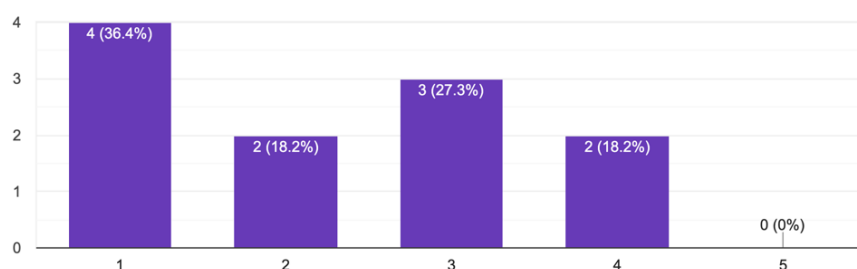
- Worried about covid outbreaks
- Cost/logistic issues with PPE or safety for pandemic
- Lack of business
- We weren't allowed to open right away...we moved to a prepay/ pre pur...
- my interpretation - liability (risk management)
- Risk management/afraid of grade 8's...
- School District will only permit food se...

• We weren't allowed to open right away...we moved to a prepay/ pre purchase delivery system.

• School District will only permit food service as a part of learning groups (class) but will not permit food production, service, sale for the general school population as it is outside of the learning group. Also, unable to approve solution for food service/delivery according to social distancing/ cohort distancing, etc.

If YES, and you have already opened; how much has business been affected?

11 responses



•Sliding scale, with 1 being a large decrease, to 5 being a slight increase

If YES, and you have already opened; what would you do differently if you could do it again? Did the process go smoothly?

(some responses were edited for grammar/clarity)

- Advertise prior to opening...especially from the Admin. A slight increase after menu board was place at the entrance.
- There are subtle changes I would (and will make). Otherwise things have been manageable. A huge impact is that we now need to serve 3 x 15-minute breaks, which completely disrupts the teaching day. Also, it would have been nice to delay opening for a while, but there is pressure to have business flowing.
- Our school asked us not to open regularly right away.....it was a bit of a process to get started, but now we are "open" for business...all be it 50% less than last year
- We are only allowed to sell to staff and are only doing pre-orders. I have a Google Form for the week that goes out on Wednesdays, staff have a couple days to submit responses. It's worked out pretty well, its been a good way to control costs/ordering. The total orders are not enough to keep everyone busy, so it's been a whole lot of make work projects for about half the classes.
- We are only open to staff, no students, School starting/ending at 11:15am and they were concerned with all the cohorts coming to get food. [at the same time]

- Recruit more help (perhaps from the school's Health & Safety Committee) to make all the required changes - it was a ton of work! Now that we are up and running, and it is going quite smoothly. Resource students and CEA's are now helping with all the individual wrapping of items - should have organized that from day one.
- We opened in the third week of classes and it went fairly smoothly. We put up plexiglass all along the serving line, got a lot of sanitizer, and rearranged how students and staff enter and order. Students aren't allowed to eat in the cafeteria anymore, so we moved the tables to make a zig zag line (like Costco did with their pallets), to allow distancing in the lineup. We also moved to more grab and go type service rather than doing as much to order to move people through faster. We increased sanitizing high touch surfaces and I've been keeping a small group out of the kitchen each day doing bookwork so there are fewer people in the kitchen. Since it's been much, much slower than expected, we're selling frozen soups, sauces, cookie dough, bread and the like every other Friday. It's mostly staff but it's been a bit of increased business.
- If I could have done something different, I would have tried to get a delivery system in place. New West is a huge school, and the cafe is all the way at one end. Lots of people have said they don't come from the other wing because it's too far and takes too long, but they would buy from us if we delivered. We're supposed to be moving to our new school during this school year however, so I felt it wasn't worth setting up a whole new system for only a few months.
- We have changed this year to the quarter system and students taking Culinary have to commit to being here all day for the quarter. Initially we were not going to open but the district decided last minute to offer the course. Presently we only have 5 students in the class down from or usually 15, thus our service is now limited to 2 days a week One prep day followed by a service day.
- It went smoothly. Just needed to make sure we had the proper plexiglass barriers in place, hand-sani people in place to ensure each person coming in has sanitized their hands. Proper take out containers.
- I should've just gone forward with what I wanted to do and waited for suggestions and/ or corrections after.
- We took extra precautions and implemented a slow gradual reopening that started with meals just for staff and culinary students. We then opened after week 2 to all students with only 3 menu items all \$5. Then gradually added items as the culinary students developed their skills. Day 1 one we had \$60 in sales with just support staff and senior students cooking for just staff while I taught health and safety. Today at the at the end of week 5. I would say we are fully operational with students cooking and serving everything. We sold \$1400.00. Over \$200 was meals to go (dinner for 4 \$20). We are adapting and finding new ways to find sales to recover costs. I would say we have worked well as a team to get to where we are today. A normal rainy Friday in October we usually sell over \$2000. So we are there yet. But every week is slowly getting better. I would not change anything. It has gone as good as it could go under the circumstances that are mostly out of our control. All you can do is adapt

Thanks so much for all your valuable input BCCASA Collective, YOU ROCK!

A Lesson On Risk Taking

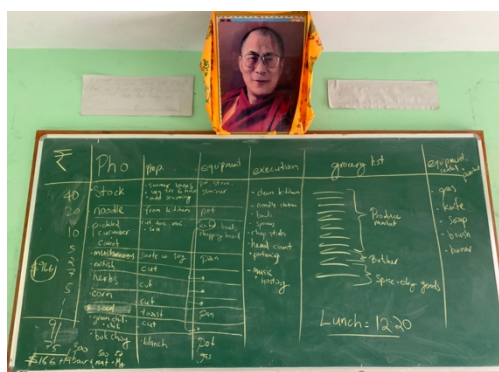
A New Member to BCCASA Reflects On International Culinary Adventure Weeks Before A Global Pandemic By Conner Knickerbocker

January 7, 2019

The corner of Renfrew and Hastings I stand in my own head, poorly brewed coffee in hand, as the world around me simply and unapologetically continues on. I'm getting rained on, and I'm late. It's the first day of the second-to-last semester of my undergrad. I'm waiting, like many other academic cattle, to be herded onto the 95B-line bus to make our daily migration up Burnaby Mountain. I am tired in more ways than one, however, I am optimistic as I have been accepted to the Fall 2019 intake of UBC's Professional Development Program—Culinary Cohort. Despite my love and hate relationship with SFU, I am looking forward to a campus change for a myriad of reasons that cannot be discussed here.

October 11, 2019

I missed my SFU undergraduate convocation due to a should-have-been 39 hour commute that turned into a 129 hour commute due to the biggest typhoon Japan has seen in 40 years.



October 18, 2019

A cold and windowless concrete room lined with silverfish and hand-sized spiders. My morning routine consists of having a cold bucket shower, and struggling with using the squat toilet as a tall and non-flexible person. Instant noodles, hand rolled cigarette, chai. A brisk walk downhill dodging the usual morning walkabouts— goats, cows, dogs, monkeys, humans, humans driving scooters, humans driving lorries, birds of which their names are unknown to me. “Tashi-Delek!” “Namaste-Ji!” I joyously burst out into this world where Indians and Tibetans

(seemingly) coexist. I am in the foothills of the Western Himalaya, in the town of Dharamshala, a few kilometres away lives the Dalai Lama, and I'm off to the kitchen.

December 10, 2019

The Khari Baoli Spice Market is the second biggest in the world, next to Istanbul's Grand Spice Bazaar. Blocks long and buildings high is a labyrinth of everything savoury, sweet, acidic, and hot. Regarding hot, upon walking to the third floor of the “chilli building” Westerners like myself start to sneeze and tear up uncontrollably (pre-covid it seemed so acceptable) as locals have harmless laughs at our expense. Bags upon bags of chillies, dried and fresh, stacked to the skies. I purchase an extra large suitcase from a neighbouring vendor and fill it with spices for home, already in my mind accepting the extra baggage fee. It's my last day in India, and thanks to my friend Pavan, I have been escorted to this century-old epicenter of flavour and culture.



January 30, 2021

Tsawwassen Nation is my new place of work, some 11116.15 kilometres from Himachal Pradesh. Upon reflecting back on that morning at the corner of Renfrew and Hastings, where upon entering that bus, I got the email that I also had been excepted into SFU's PDP program, and because I was so focused on getting into the such prestigious UBC, I had forgotten I had applied to SFU's International Cohort— with my first practicum placement being Dharamshala, India. There was risk in accepting SFU's offer. Namely, financial and timely risks, as SFU's program was 4 months longer than UBC's and included 3 months abroad. I figured that 3 months extra school work is more than worth it for an opportunity to travel halfway across the world with 17 other future teachers of all different academic backgrounds. I was right, for if I had not taken that risk I might have never learned about Tibetan/Indian fusion cuisine, or cooked and eaten dishes like Tingmo, Choley Dahl, Momo, Tikka Aloo, Galub Jamun, Tsampa, and Chai, several times a day, Chai. I might have never paraglided in Bir, or gotten



a dumpling tattoo, or lost all my right arm hairs cooking Naan in a traditional Tandoor, or due to my Japanese layover, feasted on Okonomiyaki. Most importantly, I would have never met the people behind the plates and heard their stories of living as Tibetans in India, in exile, in diaspora. Most memorably, Nyima-La, the Tibetan Headmistresses of Sherab Gatsel Lobling School, recently texted me this:

Gyaan (knowledge) in Quarantine—When government announced lock down, none of us rushed to buy gold, land, car, or iphone. But all of us rushed to buy rice, wheat, milk & vegetables. Farmer is the soul of a nation. Respect Farmer.

And strictly due to timing, if I had not taken that risk, I might not have gotten hired by SD37 and had the opportunity to work along side one Lori Pilling, who due to her wealth of knowledge and experience (especially in everything baking), has reminded me that we never stop learning and teaching as chefs, and we never stop respecting the land and the people who work it to put food on our plates.



I'm never leaving

What am I?

#48 Winter 2021 by Daniel Lesnes

I am a member of the mint family, and you're not!! My name is derived from the Latin "salvus, meaning "safe" a reference to my believed healing powers. I am a perennial, evergreen subshrub with woody stems, greyish leaves, and blue to purplish flowers. I am native to the Mediterranean region like many other aromatic herbs, though I have been naturalized in many places throughout the world. - I have one plant in my garden - I have a long history of medicinal and culinary use, and in modern times I have been used as an ornamental garden plant.

Greeks, Romans, and Arabs used me as a general tonic, for snakebites, to clean teeth, for improved memory. and to alleviate grief. I have also been known to increase fertility, and my rosmarinic acid (a chemical compound found in a variety of plants) is used to stop perspiration. My camphoraceous oil, (a fragrant white or colourless crystalline ketone, $C_{10}H_{16}O$, obtained naturally from the wood of the camphor tree, in

medicine chiefly in external preparations to relieve mild pain and itching) consisting of 50% thujone is hallucinogenic and addictive in excess (but so are Chinese dumplings). OK enough of those scientific words.

I have a much stronger scent when dried. I have a savoury, slightly peppery flavour. I appear in many European cuisines, notably Italian, Balkan and Middle Eastern cookery. In Italian cuisine, I am an essential condiment for saltimbocca and other dishes, favoured with fish. In British and American cooking, I am traditionally served as stuffing, an accompaniment to roast turkey or chicken at Christmas or Thanksgiving Day, and for Sunday roast dinners. Despite my common use of traditional and available herbs in French cuisine, I have never found favour there.

Today I am used widely in teas, veal, liver, sausages, fish, stuffing, tomato-based sauces, and salads. My flowers make a beautiful garnish.

NOTES FROM THE BACK OF HOUSE

...great thoughts on what we do

COVID-19 forces the B.C. restaurant industry to adapt to a new economic reality

by Nick Rockel Apr 29, 2020

Already facing financial challenges, restaurateurs have found creative ways to stay afloat during a pandemic that will bring lasting changes to their business

On Friday and Saturday nights, you can find Kelly Gordon at one of his Romer's restaurants, pitching in to get hamburgers and other menu items out the door. "I'm like a quarterback who should have retired a few years ago," jokes Gordon, who is 63. "I try not to burn the food at the same time as I'm burning my hand."

Weekend evenings remain busy for Romer's, founded by Gordon and chef Jim Romer in 2010, which has two locations in Vancouver and one in Port Moody. Like many of its peers since the COVID-19 pandemic forced restaurants to close their dining rooms, the small burger-focused group now relies on takeout and delivery. "Revenues are pretty strong," Gordon says. "We're about 25, 28 percent of what we would normally do."

COVID-19 has reduced the B.C. food services industry to a shadow of its former self. Before the crisis, it comprised about 15,000 restaurants and caterers, according to the BC Restaurant and Food Services Association (BCRFA). Generating

roughly \$14 billion in annual economic activity, the sector provided jobs for 190,000 people, making it the province's No. 3 private employer. More than half of those workers were aged 15 to 24.

And today? "I bet you as high as 175,000 people now are not working," says BCRFA president and CEO Ian Tostenson. "So basically, the industry is just core staff."

That's certainly the case with Romer's, which had to lay off upward of 80 hourly employees. Depending on volume, each location still has three or four members of the management team on payroll. "In our situation, we kept a general manager, a chef and a sous-chef, and those three pretty much run the business," Gordon says. "So, it's pretty lean."

As Tostenson points out, the industry he represents is highly entrepreneurial, so it finds ways to make margins on service. The pandemic has left restaurants griping more than ever about the hefty fees—some as high as 30 percent—charged by popular delivery apps. DoorDash has pledged to cut its take from some restaurants in half through the end of May, and Vancouver-based mobile ordering, contactless payment and digital loyalty platform Perk Hero now offers a similar service for a fee of just 5 percent.

Romer's came up with its own solution: offering a discount for

pickup. Right now, 75 percent of the group's revenue is pickup-based, Gordon notes. "So we're actually passing that on to the consumer, and that seems to be working very, very well," he says, adding that staff can also connect with customers by handing out drink and appetizer cards.

Low margin, high volume

Gordon and Tostenson both give the provincial and federal governments high marks for helping their industry with wage subsidies and other support. Tostenson singles out Victoria's quick decision to let B.C. restaurants deliver alcohol for the first time: "We called them on a Friday, and we had it done by Sunday."

But before COVID, there were concerns about too much cost pressure from government, he says. Besides a higher minimum wage, the employer health tax and the carbon tax, Tostenson cites rising property taxes and leasing costs. "Governments were almost oblivious to it," he says. "Industry would talk to them and bring these things to them, but the economy was strong, and I think they always felt that there was this capacity for small business to take this on."

Tostenson highlights another key number: pretax profit for the average B.C. restaurant is only about 4 percent. "So it's low-margin, and it requires high volume," he says. That might work for a big chain, but many

small players are left struggling to pay the bills.

“It’s been very, very hard to do business in Vancouver and eke out a profit,” Gordon says, noting that he and his partner don’t lack financial acumen, having worked for large restaurant companies. “The numbers are just getting absolutely crushed.”

Because Romer’s can’t price B.C.’s \$13.85 minimum wage into a hamburger, it must absorb about half of that expense, Gordon estimates. Either costs will have to come out of the business, or restaurants will need to charge \$26 for a burger, like they do in downtown San Francisco, he says. “No one’s going to pay that in this city.”

To make life more affordable for restaurants when they reopen, Tostenson calls for an effort to “structurally deal with” taxes and other overheads now. “I truly think that the era of loading on government fees and costs and inspections and all this kind of stuff is going to streamline and change for the long-term profitable health of this industry—and, actually, many industries.”

For restaurants, Tostenson would also like to see an alternative to the federal government’s 75-percent wage subsidy and \$40,000 business loan programs. “Those are good programs, but the loan suggests something that we don’t want,” he says, explaining that it will leave restaurant owners simply deferring taxes and fees.

During the 2008-09 financial crisis, lack of cash flow proved fatal for many restaurants. With that in mind, Tostenson is trying to encourage a move toward following Denmark, which offers businesses grants instead of loans. “They say, What are your fixed costs? Here’s a grant to take care of it and get you back going, because you’re going to need a lot of cash to start up.”

Do we really need that anymore?

Restaurants are trying to figure out what things will look like for them after the public health emergency ends, says urban planner Andy Yan, director of the City Program at SFU. “What’s the new normal? Is everybody going to go out to eat, or can you even go out to eat?”

Assuming that dining rooms do start allowing patrons again, chances are they’ll operate at half their previous capacity, for safety reasons. “What will happen to all this commercial space that isn’t producing?” Yan asks. “You can imagine that there are going to be all these restaurants that probably are going to be the last [businesses] to [reopen] and are going to have to have some level of physical distancing. That could undermine their entire business model.”

On the commercial real estate side, Gordon sees some reason for restaurants to be optimistic. “Landlords are going to have to understand that it’s a brave new world out there,” he says, hoping that rates and fees will come down.

But landlords giving restaurant tenants a break could run into trouble with their lenders, creating broader financial problems, Yan warns. “If I made that loan [based on] a business model from 10 years ago, and now half that space cannot be used because of physical distancing, what do you do?”

As the B.C. restaurant industry recovers from COVID, the weak Canadian dollar is another strike against it. “Because of the amount of food we import on this region, that’s going to have another impact in terms of cost,” Yan says. “Some people are able to pass on to the customer, but a lot of people aren’t. So now some restaurants are going to be compromised.”

When it comes to outside services, the economic pressures of the pandemic are pushing Romer’s and other restaurants to change things they’ve always done, Gordon observes. For example, to show cable sports, they pay a higher rate than homeowners. “All of a sudden we’re going, We’re not a sports bar. Do we really need that anymore?” Gordon says. “Why don’t we go with Apple TV and put on some guy jumping off a cliff?”

Gordon thinks he knows what many of his fellow restaurateurs will do when the pandemic is over. “They’re going to go, Yeah, I love the restaurant business—it’s a lot of fun. But is it actually a good business? And the answer is probably no for a lot of people.”

THE EXECUTIVE

President

Trevor Randle

trevor_randle@sd42.ca

Maple Ridge Secondary / 604.463.4175

1st Vice President

Lori Pilling

lpilling@deltasd.bc.ca

Delta Secondary / 604.946.4194

2nd Vice President

Stephen Schram

stephen.schram@burnabyschools.ca

Burnaby Central Secondary / 604.296.6850

Treasurer

Barbara Botter

barbara.botter@sd68.bc.ca

Cedar Community Secondary / 250.722.2414

Secretary

Meghan Dehghan

dehghan_m@surreyschools.ca

Frank Hurt Secondary / 604.590.1311

Director

Donna Frost

donna_frost@sd33.bc.ca

Sardis Secondary / 604.858.9424

2nd Director

Scott Roberts

Scott.Roberts@abbyschools.ca

Abbotsford Senior Secondary / 604.853.3367

Chairman of the Board

Brian Smith

Brian_Smith@sd42.ca

Thomas Haney Secondary / 604.463.2001

Have something to share?
Response to an article?
Recipes?
Wanna join the Executive?

LET US KNOW!

Please send any
communication to
BCCulinaryArtsSpecialists@gmail.com

It is important that we keep
BCCASA current; sharing the ideas
and voices of
Chef Instructors throughout BC!

THE ANSWER TO "WHAT AM I?"

...SAGE