

THE BOUQUET GARNI

NEWSLETTER OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA CULINARY ARTS SPECIALIST ASSOCIATION



President's Message



Although the first weeks of 2022 have not been without their challenges, I am still hopeful that we will be able to return to our old way of life. I started to reflect on this the other day when I saw a student tasting the soup she had just seasoned. I realized that she was in my class for an entire quarter last year and has been in my class every day since September and this was the first time, I had seen her face. I looked around the kitchen and realized that this was true for most of the students. It made me think of what we have all gone through over the past two years but at the same time, realize how resilient teachers are to continue in classes despite all the roadblocks that are seemingly put in our way.

Despite so many roadblocks, I do vision a time soon where we no longer need to wear masks, we can hug our friends and loved ones without hesitation and of course when we can get back to meeting colleagues in person. I am staying optimistic and have set goals and action plans for the BCCASA Executive to pursue assuming that restrictions will be a thing of the past or at the very least, extremely reduced come spring. A major goal will be to host an in-person BCCASA conference this spring. While the main intent will be to reacquaint members with one another and catch up, the inevitable outcome will be positive collaboration that will inspire. We will also be making plans for an in-person October BCCASA AGM and conference. Both locations are still TBD but if you would like to host either a spring or fall conference, please contact Lori or myself for more information.

While we have all gone through a lot, there is not a much that can compare to the devastation many of our colleagues and so many farmers endured in the November floods. Some of us were mildly affected while others saw great tragedy. Our B.C. farmers have always been immense supporters of culinary arts education and student learning in general. I felt it was our turn to give back as chefs and as educators. BCCASA has donated \$1000.00 to the BC Agriculture Council Farmer Flood Relief Fund. The BCAC knows most of the farmers affected by name and will ensure that 100% of funds collected go directly to the farmers in need. As an idea to take this

further, at the November BCTF, PSAC meeting (PSA Presidents) I presented a recommendation for the BCTF senior team to approve a financial donation on behalf of all BC educators. I provided the simple rational that farmers always support teachers, and we have a duty to give back. This motion was passed without any questions or challenges by all PSA Presidents.

Thank you for all that you continue to do, and I truly look forward to seeing everyone in person this spring.
Trevor Randle

From Donna Frost & Scott Roberts:

Please remember to let us know if you have moved so we can update your information on our membership list and keep you in the loop. Most of the time your work email is what is needed for communication.

Thanks,
Donna & Scott
<http://bccasa.ca/>

Editor's note: I'm not sure if you had a chance to read the article *Resisting Eurocentric standards and ideals in food studies* by Megan Brevner, Martina Seo, and Joe Tong in the most recent issue of the BCTF's *Teacher Magazine*, but it's worth a look as but it raises an interesting issue.

To say the culinary industry is changing would be a massive understatement. The world of education is changing too. For me as a teacher, I look upon the faces of my very multiethnic classroom and become very aware that am teaching them that the European methods and terminology of cooking is the gold standard. Although basic skills are important, this approach diminishes culinary techniques that they may know (that I may not know) as being inferior. There is something about that philosophy that doesn't sit quite right with me. As educational approaches and culinary techniques continue to evolve, it may time for the education of cooking to evolve as well.

The article in *Notes from the BOH*, is an American perspective but one that relates much more to professional culinary education.

Keep your knives sharp

Your friendly neighbourhood editor,
Stephen Schram

What am I?

#49 & #50 Winter 2022 by Daniel Lesnes

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I am perhaps best known as a crayon colour. My red-orange skin is similar in shape and pulp to a tomato. My creamy, tangy, sweet flavour is a cross between a plum and a pumpkin. I have several brothers and sisters, some soft, others firm. Depending on their tannin levels they must be eaten ripe, (or you would be better off eating the crayon).

I love to cuddle with my family in a paper bag kept warm. Native to China and Japan, I also grew wild in Virginia and was used as a valuable food to early settlers. Containing good amounts of vitamin A & C, I am used in puddings, baked goods, and game sauces. I can be frozen whole (which removes any traces of tannin), thawed slightly, and used as a frozen dessert. I am deciduously delicious!

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You can spot me right away in the produce department, although cellular differences make me not a true citrus as I am a member of the genus *Fortunella*. In fact, my genus is named after Robert Fortune, who introduced me to Europe in 1846. Native to South-East China, I am also grown in the United States and Japan. My golden skin is thin, soft and sweet so I am eaten whole, even with my rather dry, sour pulp. I am no more than an inch and a half in diameter. In Western countries an entire plant of me was placed on the table at fashionable dinners for palette cleansing between courses. Other than being eaten out of hand, and in salads, I am preserved in honey, candied, syrup, marmalade, or as garnish.

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!

@culinarythunder

Thomas Haney Culinary Arts
"Cooking with kids is not just about ingredients, recipes, and cooking. It's about harnessing imagination, empowerment, and creativity."

Check out Chef & Chairman of BCCASA, Brain Smith and all the going ons of his Maple Ridge School



@bcaitc

We are a non-profit, charitable organization that works with educators to bring BC agriculture and food education to students throughout the province.

www.bcaitc.ca

BC Agriculture in The Classroom do so much good work for our schools, including the Take A Bite of BC program for our cafeterias!



@teachertong

Joe Tong 湯溢傑 he/they

Personal blog

🌈 teaching life stuff

✂️ making & always learning

🚀@slssdesign 🧠@theonlyjethro

One part sticker emporium, one part patio garden, one part fashion blog, one part social commentary challenging your cultural, food, & gender prejudices, check out Richmond teacher extraordinaire Joe Tong



BCAITC Celebrates 30 Years!

Abbotsford, BC – January 4, 2022

BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation (BCAITC) is thirty this year! Who would have thought that a simple idea borne around a farmer's table would impact so many youths today? BCAITC has now established itself as the leader BC K-12 agriculture and food education and has grown by leaps and bounds over the past 30 years. BCAITC now reaches over half a million students in classrooms in all regions of the province. The organization's innovative and fun fresh delivery, culinary, and growing programs have expanded year-over-year. BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program, +Milk, Take a Bite of BC, Spuds in Tubs, Planting a Promise, Harvest Bin Project, Fresh to You Fundraiser, and Ag Adventures have now become mainstays in BC schools. Plus the Summer Institute program and professional workshops provide agriculture literacy education for teachers. BCAITC has become known as the source for BC agriculture resources with over 500 lessons, videos, recipes, and activities available for free download on www.bcaitc.ca.



CELEBRATIONS

To celebrate three decades of bringing agriculture and food education to BC's students, many fun and educational activities are planned year-round in 2022. January activities to kick-off the celebrations include a 30-year highlights video, BC Agri-Food Industry Gala online auction, milestone timeline, top 30 resource list, and more. Stay tuned to www.bcaitc.ca for updates

THANK YOU BCAITC COMMUNITY!

BCAITC's growth over the past 30 years is thanks to the dedicated contributions from many - sponsors, donors, partners, champions, volunteers, Board of Directors, and staff. Plus, BCAITC's success is possible with the passion of BC teachers who enthusiastically share BC's agriculture and food story - and BC students who are eager to explore and learn. We are glad to have you on our team! Pat Tonn, BCAITC Executive Director, said, "It's remarkable how BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation's footprint has grown over the past three decades! It's been an incredible journey. Through programs, resources, and our network, we have expanded to reach over half a million students. As we look back fondly at the past thirty years, we are excited about the adventures ahead." Melanie Lantz, President, BCAITC Board of Directors, said, "A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has supported us over the years. Together, we have provided 30 years of interactive, thought-provoking, forward-thinking - and fun - agriculture education. We are excited to move into the future with your continued support!"



Share your memorable stories of BCAITC on social media with the hashtag #bcaitc30.

Join BCAITC as we move forward into the next 30 years! Let's celebrate!

Check a highlight video here: <https://vimeo.com/657979904>

NOTES FROM THE BACK OF HOUSE

...great thoughts on what we do

The (Mis)education of America's Culinary Schools

Coursework at traditional culinary schools has yet to reflect the diverse cooking happening in today's restaurants

by Korsha Wilson

Jul 11, 2019

When MJ Sanders was a student at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, she looked forward to the “Cuisines of the Americas” class. This was 2010, and the class focused on regional cooking in North and South America. Two days of the course were dedicated to the American South, an ambitious task given the diversity and sheer expanse of the region. Sanders, a Georgia native, knew the lesson wouldn't cover everything, but she hoped it would convey the breadth of ingredients and cooking techniques that define southern cuisine. That day, she suited up in her school-issued chef whites, ready to dive in.

“We made a plate of fried chicken and collard greens,” Sanders remembers. Instead of exploring, say, the round, layered umami of Lowcountry cooking, her instructor compacted the lesson into one lumpish look at one of

the region's most enduring culinary stereotypes. The tasks for the day were divided among students so Sanders didn't even get to participate in making each component on the plate. “We spent at least 12 weeks learning French food and technique,” she says. “This is supposed to be the premier American culinary school — so how is this the only southern food we're learning?”

Today, Sanders is the director of operations for Brownsville Community Culinary Center, a culinary training program in a historically Black neighborhood in Brooklyn founded by Claus Meyer, the culinary entrepreneur behind Noma, and Lucas Denton, a former hospitality worker. Sanders creates content for Brownsville's 40-week program, emphasizing Africa's influence on the world's food, where participants research African ingredients, learn about Black chefs who have impacted American cuisine, complete internships in top restaurants, and work in an on-site bakery and cafe. Brownsville prepares its mostly Black and Latinx participants to enter the industry and teaches them about their heritage cuisines. Sanders wants the young cooks to learn what she didn't in culinary school. “I want

them to be able to ask questions and find answers about their own stories.”

Culinary schools are meant to offer aspiring chefs, writers, food photographers, and restaurateurs a toolkit of foundational techniques and working knowledge of professional cooking history. In recent years, America's landscape of celebrated fine dining restaurants has expanded, creating more opportunities for cooks to work in restaurants that aren't French or Italian. But many elite institutions' coursework doesn't yet reflect the diverse cooking happening in today's restaurants.

Since the first American culinary arts school was founded in Boston in 1879, curricula at schools like Johnson & Wales, the International Culinary Center, Institute of Culinary Education, and the Culinary Institute of America have emphasized French technique and dishes, and a professional kitchen environment based on the brigade system (modernized and sanctified when the chef and culinary demigod Auguste Escoffier published *Le Guide Culinaire* 1903). Program length and coursework for degree or certificate programs in culinary or baking and pastry arts can vary,

but many spend weeks or months using French repertoire to teach basic cooking skills. The International Culinary Center promises students six months or 400 hours of what they call French “fine cooking,” which culminates in learning the aforementioned brigade system — students work saucier, garde manger, or patissier stations. Even when schools highlight cuisines from other parts of the world, those cuisines don’t receive the same reverence.

At the Institute of Culinary Education in New York City, students take a “Cuisines of Asia” course, which attempts to cover the cuisines of Thailand, India, China, and Japan in a mere 48 hours of classwork. (For comparison, the school also offers a course highlighting the regional differences of French and Italian cuisine in the same number of hours.) What these schools don’t list is time dedicated to American Indian, African, or Middle Eastern cuisines — and only the Culinary Institute of America lists courses for regional Latin American cuisines — a glaring omission as the restaurant scene adapts to match an increasingly diverse nation.

As a result, culinary school students graduate with a flattened idea of which foods comprise culinary arts. Beyond that, many face significant knowledge gaps and must learn

foundational cooking of other cultures on the job or on their own time. If the goal of culinary schools is to produce a well-rounded chef, curriculum that only prioritizes French or Italian cuisine seems insufficient. Why not teach a Mexican mole next to a French mornay or Nigerian jollof rice next to a pilaf? Or a Hoppin’ John next to cassoulet? Why don’t American culinary schools reflect the multi-faceted world in which they exist?

The economics and affordability of culinary school is a big deterrent from attending, as others have reported. Spending up to \$30,000 per year isn’t an option for many would-be cooks, especially when the food you wish to learn isn’t adequately covered in class. Diana Davila, chef and owner of Mi Tocaya, a casual Mexican restaurant in Chicago’s Logan Square neighborhood, decided against culinary school for this reason. “I could be debt-free and learning another way in a restaurant,” she says. For Davila, cooking and eating regional Mexican dishes with her family in Chicago is more important than a European-focused education. The mother sauces of Mexican cuisine have depth and complexity and require even more skill as the French varieties, she says. “People are always like, ‘French food is the best’ and no, it’s not,” says Davila.

It’s true — France is considered the standard bearer of culinary

tradition. But that’s thanks to hundreds of years of documentation of techniques, ingredient pairings, and regional dish variations that have formed a culinary canon. Colonization disseminated these traditions (and French language and culture in general) to different corners of the world. To put it simply: those who write the history books get to create the standard for everyone else. Chefs like Marie-Antoine Careme, Urbain Dubois, and Paul Bocuse receive credit for advancing the profession, while other cultures get left out of the conversation.

Alternative schools and programs add different dishes and cooking techniques to their curriculum by incorporating global cuisines alongside French fundamentals used industry-wide. Their goal is to create cooks who can create the best final product, not just a replica of what they’ve learned in a classroom.

Jodi Liano, founder of San Francisco Cooking School, says traditional culinary schools produce “recipe robots,” or cooks that reproduce what they’ve been taught without thinking about why they’re cooking a dish or making a sauce a certain way. “We want to create graduates that are equipped to make decisions about using certain flavors or ingredients,” Liano says. Guest lecturers like chef-owners Gonzalo Guzman of Nopalito or

Brandon Jew of Mister Jiu's introduce students to ingredients and flavors in their respective Mexican and Chinese cuisines and teach the cooks how to use them.

Amanda Cohen, chef and owner of award-winning, plant-focused Dirt Candy in New York and a graduate of the recently closed Natural Gourmet Institute, says culinary schools should do a better job of preparing students for restaurant realities. "I had a grad come in who had never used a deep fryer," she says. She credits her time at Natural Gourmet Institute, where she studied plant-based cooking, with helping hone her vision independent of dining trends. "We learned how to make quinoa as part of the curriculum in the '90s," she says. "It was always ahead of its time, and it allowed me to be ahead of the curve." When hiring, Cohen looks for workers that demonstrate consistency. She's not concerned with whatever top culinary school might appear on a resume.

The Culinary Institute of America has to contend with not only a shift in student interests but the evolving role of chefs as well, according to provost Mark Erickson. He graduated from the associates' program in 1977. "Before, we were preparing someone to put on a white coat and work the line at a hotel, but that's changed," he says. Erickson hosts "chat with the provost" meetings where students give him

feedback about coursework, and he says their desires go far beyond making the best pastries or seasoning something properly. "These young people want to do things that not only impact the culinary world, but society in general. They're really passionate."

For those that can't or choose not to attend culinary school, restaurants that focus on regional cuisines offer cooks another way to learn skills and flavors that interest them. Davila says since opening her restaurant, she's been floored by the amount of Latinx cooks who apply. Many say they're seeking out her kitchen specifically to learn Mexican cuisine. "It was so emotional for me because they want to learn the food of their heritage," she says. When foods like mole verde or masa made with Oaxacan heirloom blue corn come up, those cooks often already have a connection. "We're able to get the best out of each other because we share a reference."

Seeing someone who looks like you in a leadership role can also impact a cook's trajectory. Back in Brooklyn, a Brownsville participant took Sanders's recommendation to intern at Cosme with chef Daniela Soto-Innes. The participant had already worked in French-style kitchens around New York City. "She came back without a question in her mind of where she wants to be,"

Sanders says. "She spent an afternoon with Daniela and felt that she could be her — because she saw it."

Access to successful chefs from varied backgrounds who tell their cultural food stories is as valuable as any school degree. That guidance can illuminate a clearer path for young cooks to define their unique culinary voice, as chefs like Angela Dimayuga and Mashama Bailey have stated. Sanders hopes her participants pursue careers where they feel empowered to cook the food they want, not just the food that institutions have told them they should idolize. "You don't have to wait for some cisgender white dude to pat you on the shoulder and say you're good enough," Sanders says. "You can tell your own story and work somewhere else."

Accessed at:

<https://www.eater.com/young-guns-rising-stars/2019/7/11/20688135/american-culinary-schools-problem-french-curriculum>

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

LET US KNOW!

Please send any
communication to
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It is important that we keep
BCCASA current,
sharing the ideas and voices of
Chef Instructors throughout BC!

The answer to What Am I...

#49 is persimmon!
#50 is kumquat!

