Victoria Regional Competition June 9th 2024
Camosun College Interurban Campus

The very generous donations received from 15 Bailliage members enabled us to hold the Jeune Chef competition this year at Camosun College (CC). Apart from the College's willingness to host the event with no facilities use charge, there are still several costs that must be covered in order to support this event successfully. The Victoria Conseil members extend their sincere thanks and appreciation to both the donors and the Camosun Culinary Arts staff with whom it was a pleasure to work.

On Sunday morning, June 09, seven eager young chefs were able to participate in this year's competition. All were trained, or are continuing their studies, at Camosun College. Their names and restaurant affiliations are as follows:

Samantha Larocque – House of Boateng
Brodie Cote – Finn's & Camosun College
Chase Flamont – Oak Bay Beach Hotel & CC
Levi Fox – Rudi & CC
Adele Hendrikx – Chef ADelicious & CC
Isabela Martin – Camosun College
Zach Panchuck – Aura @The Inn at Laurel Point

The judging panel included seven highly experienced and internationally accredited Chefs:

Tasting Judges were:
Colin Southcombe
Milton Rebello
Lukas Gurtner

Kitchen Judges were:
Mark Cornett
Robert Budlong
Daryl Pope
Christopher Compton

Eight students and Camosun culinary staff acted as Commis assistants, while others prepared delicious buffet selections to keep up the participants' and judges' strength.

Once the candidates were advised of the 'Black Box" ingredients for inclusion in their respective courses, they were required to write their menu and list all of the key components. The task was then to prepare five platings of an appetizer and a main course. Large sea scallops and Cornish Game Hen were the two proteins. The preparation of each course was strictly timed and was a challenge for one or two.

Non-participants were not permitted in the kitchen, and mentoring chefs hovered in the hall, somewhat more stressed than their protégées competing inside.

Kitchen photos by Athena Pimentel,
Camosun College

The kitchen judges were very active and vigilant, observing each aspect of kitchen and time management, while interesting whiffs drifted from food in a smoker, from steaming vegetables, and roasting ovens.

For the first time, we were able to arrange for our Bailliage's donating members to attend the afternoon session of the competition. David Lang, the Chair of Culinary Arts, very kindly arranged for a comfortable room with tables and chairs where the Bailliage members could meet, enjoy a snack if they wished, and view all of the plated entries which were numbered one through seven (1-7). The judges did not know the names or affiliations of those competing.

The judging did take more time than anticipated as two candidates' scores were very close. Meanwhile the Bailliage members and the competitors, also now with us and awaiting the results, were able to enjoy a glass of Rosé from our cellar, or a soft beverage. Finally, David Lang announced that Levi Fox had gained third place, Isabela Martin was second and Chase Flamont was the winner of the Victoria 2024 Jeune Commis competition.

Bailli Gail Gabel, presented Chase with his Winner's Medallion and welcomed him into the Chaîne's Victoria Bailliage. In addition, Chase was presented with the Bailliage's Regional Trophy on which his name will be engraved, and he will be able to keep this trophy at his mentor's restaurant, until the next competition. He was also delighted to receive a Chaîne back-pack from the Bailliage.

David Lang encouraged all of the candidates to seek out the judges to discuss their rating and learn from this competition experience. In discussing the competition with the candidates afterwards, your Bailli was impressed by their interest and eagerness to compete again next year. The Conseil will continue to plan for a 2025 competition, subject to Camosun College being able to host and make their kitchen facilities available.

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