



## Probus Club - of Central Edmonton

March 2018

Guest Editor: Ken Hoffman

### **Speaker: March 20, – Alan Dumonceaux, Chair of the baking program at NAIT**

Alan Dumonceaux spoke about international competitive baking and his experiences being involved in it. His experience covered a several years and events.

International Competitive Baking has four stages. First the countries that wish to participate select their team representatives. These teams will then compete at one of the 4 regional events. Canada competed against 8 other teams in the Americas Region in Argentina in 2015. Canada was successful and along with 2 other teams from the region moved on the World Cup of Baking held in Paris in 2016. There are 12 teams competing in the world Cup. Three from the podium of the 2012 competition and 9 from the four regions. Winners of this competition were South Korea (first), Taiwan (second), and France (third).

The Master of Baking competition, which is the pinnacle of the competition, was held in 2018. The competitors are the world's elite. 18 bakers are selected from the World Cup competitors in one of three categories. Canada had two competitors selected. Alan competed in Gourmet Baking.

Allan explained the effort and time commitment leading up to a competition and the need to focus on details that the baker must contend with. It essentially consumed his life for months leading up to a competition. For example, he had to consider the loss of weight from the start of cooking a pastry to the time it would be weighed. His croissants needed to weigh 72.5 grams as being placed in the oven to get the 60 grams weight at the time weighing. This also meant that he needed to learn how much time there would be between taking the cooked product out of the oven and when it would be weighed. He also had to adjust his recipes to use French ingredient. Different butter and different flour. To do this he dedicated 10 days to baking just before the competition.

He shared numerous pictures illustrating the evolution of the baked product. Also, he shared some nuggets of information, such as Canada has poor quality butter for baking relative to France. Our Flour is of a high quality, particularly good for Bread. But too high a quality for pastries. He noted that he had to go to extraordinary measure to get the molds need to form the pastries. He in fact visited a blacksmith at one point. He wrapped up by telling us that under the rules he could not compete again, but it was very worthwhile.

It was truly an extraordinary story, and we were all justifiably impressed.

### ***Tour: April 26 – NAIT Baking Facilities***

The **tour** was combined with an extraordinary **lunch**. About 37 members and guests attended the events. For those visited Ernest's for the first time, it was a surprise to find a first-class restaurant. This is operated almost entirely by the students and it is also open to the public.

**The Lunch:** For those visited Ernest's for the first time, it was a surprise to find a first-class restaurant. This is operated almost entirely by the students and it is also open to the public.

All 37 members, spouse and guests really enjoyed the entire meal, as illustrated by these pictures. The salad, entrée and dessert which were most tasty and attractive.



**The Tour:** The group was divided into two for the tour. **Alan Dumonceau**, head of the baking program led one group, and **Josh Ward**, the culinary instructor, led the other.

We visited the three culinary kitchens that prepare for Ernest's; cold kitchen, prep and line kitchen and contemporary kitchen. Meat cutting, meat smoking and cheese making are part of the curriculum. The basic culinary program takes two years with 15-week semesters and has a class intake of 50 selected from 300 applicants. Some students do a full culinary program of four years (2+2).

**Josh** explained some of the teaching methods and safety considerations, combining theory and practice. Overhead screens are used for student instruction and guidance.



We also visited to the bakery instruction areas and were toured through those. Equipment such as ovens, mixers and dough folders were explained, and students were preparing baked goods.

Alan, speaker the previous week, explained some of the skills involved in croissant baking. Referring to a baker's ingredient map, he explained the selection criteria for flour and butter in making patisseries. Only unsalted butter with the right moisture content is used, which is imported from Ireland or New Zealand. The last word in NAIT's hospitality was a package of three croissants (plain, raspberry and chocolate) for each of us.

Allan explained croissant making to the groups including the problems with butter resulting in using Irish or New Zealand butter.



Alan had packages of three croissants for each of us