



The birth of the Pastry Day held in London



On Sunday the 25th of April, at the Cordon Bleu School in the beautiful surroundings of Marylebone, the first ever Pastry Day was organised by The Association Culinaire Francaise.

- A competition for the best chocolate dessert, which promoted the best British Chocolate Desserts, sponsored by Valrhona
- A Pastry demonstration, orchestrated by the ACF and Boiron enterprises.

The day began at 8am with the welcoming of the 5 professional competitors and 3 students:



Arnaud Souchet of Pennyhill Park Hotel, Nicolas Bouhelier of Le manoir aux quat'saisons, Will Torent of Bachmann's patisserie, Rebecca Lea de Silvia of the Lanesborough Hotel and Johannes Bonin of The Connaught Hotel made up the

professional category and joined Mr Yvon Coignard, Technical Judge for the professionals.

The Student category comprised Igwebe of Westminster College, Tomislav Cukman, of le cordon Bleu and Yun Jiang of Le cordon Bleu who joined Yolande Stanley (pastry lecturer at Tames Valley University), Technical Judge for the students.

Following a draw by lot, competitors were assigned their numbers and set up their equipment in the school demonstration room. Slipping on the Jacket offered by Bragard, they commenced their desserts one after another at 15-minute intervals.

At 9:30am, the first of the sixty guests invited for the demonstration arrived and enjoyed coffee and viennoiseries prepared by Mr Yvon Coignard of Gourmet pâtisserie. Mr Benoit Blin executive Pastry Chef at Le manoir aux quat'saison (The 2 Michelin Starred restaurant near Oxford) presented the demonstration organised by Boiron coulis.

Presenting an

- exotic fruit ravioli with Kaffie leaf and coconut sorbet
- Cube Matcha green tea and apricot

Recipes available on our web site

By 12:30pm the demonstration had come to a close and from 1:00pm, aperitifs were served together with petits fours made by Didier's Pâtisserie. As the competitors were presented one by one, the audience of chefs and pastry chefs were astonished by the quality of the plated deserts that had been crafted.

The pictures will be available on the following link

<http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/101018334425767756396/Photos?authkey=Gv1sRgCOawy-HQmOCyZgE>

Photography was organised by Mr Richard Victoria, a very active member of the ACF committee in charge of sponsorship, whose improvisation saved the day following the unfortunate delay suffered by our official photographer who was stuck in Bangkok.

By 2:30pm Charles How, an eminent member of the ACF for a 'mere' 60 years, had presented all of the competitors and following a short speech by Miss Lesley Gray, the Director of the Cordon Bleu School in London, it was the turn of Gilles Quillot, President of the ACF to make a speech.

The president underlined the perfect organisation of the day, expertly overseen by Mr Loïc Malfait and Mr Anthony Ekizian, both vice presidents at the ACF. Special mention was also reserved for His Excellency, Mr Gourdault-Montagne, French Ambassador to the court of St-James, for his much appreciated support for the pastry day. The president finished by emphasizing the role played by the ACF and its impact on promoting French Cuisine in the UK.

Next came the time for Champagne, Mumm Cordon Rouge, no less, served by the charming Anita Virik, also a very active member of the ACF committee, aided by the very amiable students of the Cordon bleu.

Then, following ten-minutes worth of deliberations, the judges, headed by Mr Michael Nadell (Nadell Patisserie) and assisted by Mr Yvan Cahour, (Pastry Lecturer at Hammersmith and West London College), Regis Negrier from Wolseley restaurant, Mr Regis Beauregard from the Ritz and Ivan Icara Salicru from Locanda Locatelli, announced the results:

In the Student Category, Yun Jiang of The cordon bleu impressed the judges with her desert:



Miss Jiang left with a collection of beautiful books by Valrhona.

In the Professional Category, Nicolas Bouhelier, of The manoir aux quat'saisons received a magnum of Mumm champagne, a short course in Valrhona's Chocolate School and of course the trophy created specially for the occasion by the artist Mr Christian Champagne.



Nicolas Bouhelier in the middle, Mickael Nadell, president of the jury on the right and Gilles Quillot president of the association culinaire Française on the left

In his acceptance speech, Mr Nicolas Bouhelier especially thanked his chef Mr Benoit Blin for the priceless advice that he had offered him during his training for the competition.

It was then that the guests went their separate ways, until next year's second Pastry Day and British Chocolate Dessert of the Year that will be held in April 2011.