

Canadian

Restaurant & Foodservice News

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BUSINESS OPERATIONS

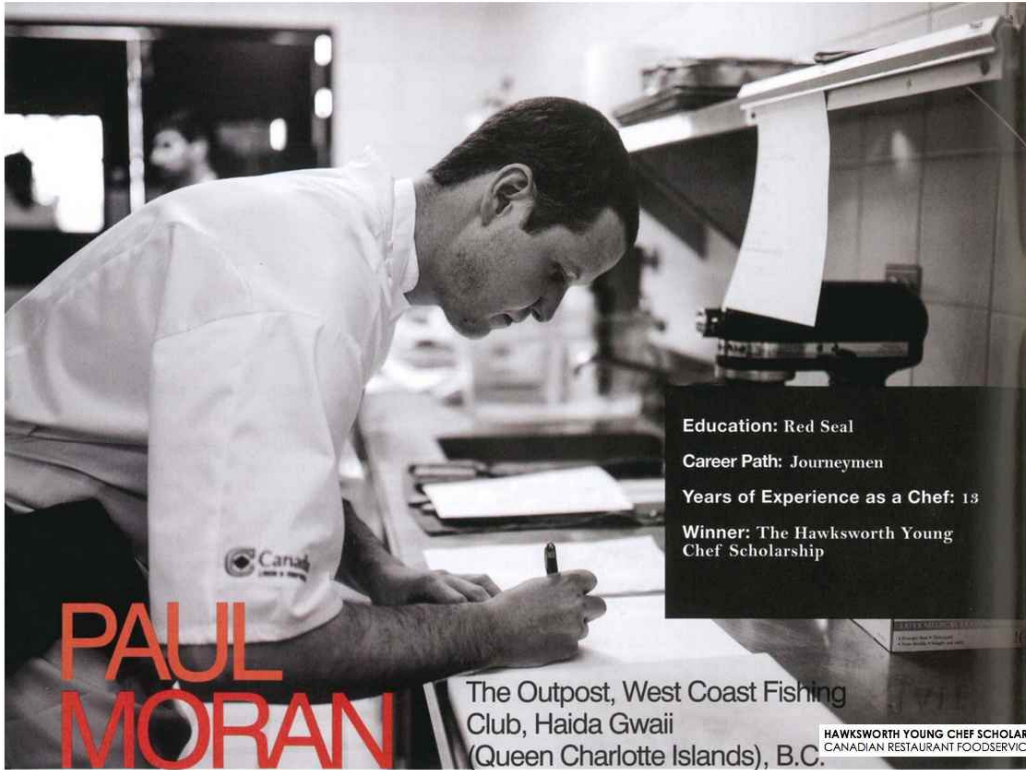
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Education: Red Seal
Career Path: Journeymen
Years of Experience as a Chef: 13
Winner: The Hawksworth Young Chef Scholarship

PAUL MORAN

The Outpost, West Coast Fishing Club, Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands), B.C.

HAWKSWORTH YOUNG CHEF SCHOLARSHIP



have a huge respect for anyone who can bring them to market. They are also very versatile: seafood, meat, vegetables and pasta – you name it and truffles will probably accompany it just as prophets pass; I'm not taking this or canned here – fresh only!

What do you think is the most underrated food trend?
 The most underrated trend in the industry is restaurants that promote and use bio-dynamic, natural or wild ingredients. Don't forget about natural wines either; a good bottle is a rare find in Vancouver.

Who were your biggest influences or inspirations for becoming a chef?
 As a young chef I was inspired by the TV show Iron Chef Japan. Some fathers and sons will watch football or hockey. For my dad and I, Iron Chef was the Friday night ritual. The biggest influence I've had in my career was my first real full time mentor, David Hawksworth. I started working under him at age 17 and his influences still affect my cooking on a daily basis.

Is there any type of cuisine that you would like to experiment with?
 There is a cuisine that I would like to experiment more with and it's Mexican. On my days off I often find myself trying out new recipes with friends. We try making Mexican blood sausage or bone marrow tostadas. I'm currently on stage internship at Pujol in Mexico City.

If you knew you were going to be exiled to a desert island, what three ingredients or food items would take with you?
 After discovering the plans to have me exiled to a desert island, I'd quickly assemble a kit of ice, limes and Mezcal.

What are the essential ingredients for success in the restaurant business today?
 That's a tough question. I'll start by quoting a business mentor who told me to attempt less and accomplish more. The second would be to never trade time for money. A final key ingredient would be offering value for money to your customers.

What do you think is the most overrated food trend right now?
 The most overrated trend in cooking today is cooking with insects. I'm a skeptic and speaking from experience with dining on bugs.

Which cooking technique or tool is a favourite of yours right now, and why?
 There is something so primal about cooking over an open fire, whether it's

learning how to cook a calzone over coals at camp or grilling chicken gizzards over charcoal. I am a huge fan of fat dripping on coals.

What is your favourite food combination right now?
 My favourite food combinations today are associating ingredients by their colour. A perfect example for me would be spring salmon, side stripe prawns and Espelette pepper. Each ingredient has its own hue of red and when combined in a dish they work wonders on the eyes and taste buds.

Do you have any culinary guilty pleasures? Food treats that you couldn't live without?
 After receiving a recipe from a friend for gooey cinnamon buns with icing they have become my weak spot. I only eat them twice a year.

Describe your feelings when you learned you were the recipient of the Hawksworth Scholarship?
 When it was announced by David that I had won the competition, I had a real sense of personal accomplishment. I've competed lots before and even won some other competitions, but nothing had come close to how happy and proud I was after hearing my name called. I had a big build up to the competition day and to have come out on top was almost surreal.

What kind of impact do you think receiving this honour will have on your career?
 After receiving an honour like this my career has permanently changed, for the better. I feel like I just got instantly launched into a new stage in my career where I can come even closer to meeting goals I've had set for a long time.

What advice would you have for aspiring new chefs as they enter the industry?
 If I'm offering advice to a younger chef I think back to when I first started working in Vancouver. There were days when I wanted to throw in the towel and I came very close to doing it. Looking back now I'm so happy I never quit my job and now I really do have a sense of the patience you need to be successful in our industry.

Q&A

What are your earliest memories of cooking?
 My earliest memories of cooking we're helping my Filipina nanny help prepare our family dinner. Both of my parents worked full time so I was able to appreciate some of the ethnic recipes that she shared. Homemade spring rolls and wok-fried rice were some of my favourites.

Why do you think you were drawn to a culinary career?
 I was drawn to the culinary field because I loved to eat. As a family we always took pride in growing vegetables in our garden and having a local butcher prepare animals for us. With all of the amazing ingredients available in my life I took to the stove and never left.

How would you describe your foodservice operation?
 The way we operate at the Outpost (at the West Coast Fishing Club) is very unique. It's a small, remote lodge in northwest Haida Gwaii. My wife and I cook for 14 guests and 14 staff, three meals a day for 100 days straight! Even though the job is tough at times, the beauty and tranquility of the lodge make life and work seem effortless. This is one place you can't run to the corner store if you forget to order eggs!

If you knew you were eating your last meal, what would you have?
 If I knew I was eating my last meal I would order spot prawn stuffed morels poached in butter. A bottle of wine from the Jura in France to wash it all down would be in order too.

What is your philosophy about food?
 My philosophy about food and cooking is ingredients first. I really think to be the best you need to have access to the best ingredients from local producers and foragers. When I visit a farm or forage some ingredients from the beach or forest, that's when amazing dishes come together for me.

Where do you go to dine out?
 Temaki sushi in Vancouver is where you'll find me eating out. I just discovered this gem. It seemed like the chef knew all of his customers on a first name basis and he's been in business for 12 years. Everything is homemade and the quality of fish is beyond fresh.

What is your favourite ingredient?
 My favourite ingredient would have to be the wild Italian black truffle. They are so hard to find that I