

COMMERCIAL COOKERY AND REGIONAL FOOD PRODUCTION



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ISS Institute/TAFE Fellowship

Fellowship sponsored by the State Training Board, Victorian Government

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 International Specialised Skills Institute Inc. (ISS Institute)

About ISS Institute

International Specialised Skills Institute Inc is an innovative national enterprise. Our aim is to enhance business' and individuals' ability to create and manufacture innovative products and services in-line with the world's best. It identifies what abilities industry, commerce and the arts needs [problem], then obtains them from overseas by building global partnerships through the Fellowship program [mechanism] and conducts activities [solutions].

Growth and success

ISS Institute is initiating a new phase of activity. This marks the next stage of development for one of Australia's most exciting and innovative enterprises. ISS has successfully brought together some of Australia most talented people each determined to build Australia's industries towards global competitiveness.

The experience of the past decade underpins our acute insights into design, technologies (leading-edge and traditional) and solutions through carefully constructed strategies. ISS Institute works closely with industry, government, professional associations, individuals and educational institutions.

We have undertaken major initiatives in restructuring and positioning ISS Institute to expand our programs and activities throughout Australia including regional and rural centres. Significant contributing factors to ISS Institute's success are the high calibre of the Fellows, the focus and nature of the study programs, our sponsors and partners. Those who have provided funds and are continuing to actively support ISS are Australian Multicultural Foundation, RMIT University, Deakin University and the Palladio Foundation.

ISS Institute acknowledges the generous contribution of the State Training Board as sponsors of this Fellowship.

Our point of difference

ISS Institute has a holistic approach where we work across industry and occupation sectors and integrate design, skills, knowledge and attitudes in our Fellowship program and education/training activities and special events. The focus is towards generating a knowledge-based economy.

Our experience has shown that most participants in ISS Institute activities perceive that the lack of skills is the principle cause of problems in the workplace. We believe that attitudes are often the constraint to turning ideas into product and a successful business; the ability to think laterally, to work and communicate across disciplines, to understand cultural diversity, to be able to take risks and think outside the familiar.

In a careful, structured and effective way, ISS Institute Fellowships and activities are intended to improve our ability to compete with the rest of the world. The possibilities are unlimited.

2.2 Commercial cookery – The Australian Context

Australia boasts a vibrant restaurant and food service industry and Melbourne, in particular, is well known for the high standard and number of food establishments. The city boasts one of the highest ratios of restaurants per head of population in the world and Tourism Victoria actively promotes the state nationally and internationally as a premium tourist destination for people interested in food and discovering the culinary treasures of the regions outside Melbourne.

The commercial cookery sector is an integral element of the Hospitality Industry because it provides the skilled staff who produces the services (i.e. food products). In this scenario the definitions are kept broad to include the variety of sub-sector groups that make up the commercial cookery area. This sector will continue to be important in our state and nation's economic development due to the growth in the service economy. There will be continuous demand for leisure-based tourism opportunities in which eating and enjoying food (and wine) related activities are an integral part of the travel experience.

Traditionally, cooks learnt on the job moving through the brigade system.¹ The peak position within the hierarchy was of the executive chef and to reach this position required many years of work-based learning and training. Employees in the past started work a lot younger than people today, worked for less money and generally stayed in the one organisation for the duration of their working career. Generally speaking, most organisations retained their knowledge within the enterprise and there was little cross-industry communication.

With the advent of the TAFE system throughout Australia, commercial cookery training was offered formally through the apprenticeship system whereby employees were released from work to attend classes of instruction at a local training venue. This system still pertains today and is structured to provide trainees with a broad knowledge of commercial cookery and provide opportunities for learning that may not be available within their respective enterprises. For example, a commercial cookery trainee may work in a large-scale catering venue and have little opportunity to access experience of *a la*

¹ The brigade system of kitchen management organises each section of the kitchen according to the work that section contributes to the food production process. For example, a simplified modern brigade will have five sections: cold entrée, hot entrée, main course, dessert and pastry. This form of kitchen management is still practised on a more extensive scale in larger catering establishments such as the Grand Hyatt and the Hotel Sofitel.

carte cooking. TAFE courses are meant to “fill in the gaps” so to speak for trainees who work such situations.

The current formal training situation for commercial cooks is the product of various changes, at a national and state level, over the last decade. Perhaps the biggest change was the introduction of the Training Packages (TP) under the exegesis the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). The Commercial Cookery Training Package is based on a tiered system with several points of entry. For example, potential cookery trainees may enter a Certificate level course at any stage (1-4) or choose to undertake training in a single unit or group of units.

At the completion of a Certificate 3 Hospitality (Commercial Cookery), commercial cookery trainees are deemed to have completed their formal training in this vocational area. Subsequently, any further training opportunities, if available at all, are generated from within the workplace. This is scope for the delivery of a Certificate 4 but at the moment no institution offers this programme. With the pressure on small business to be competitive and remain financially viable, training is not considered a priority for commercial cookery staff once they have completed their apprenticeship training. Consequently, many employees suffer from a lack of opportunity for promotion, professional development and sufficient remuneration. These courses need be given greater prominence as the pathway for the on-going professionalisation of the commercial cook. We need to look beyond state-sponsored training and engage with current employees, employers and industry representatives to enhance the quality of the training on-the-job and generally. Perhaps the most significant challenge facing the industry sector is the high attrition rate.

2.3 Organisations which have impact on this industry/occupation

Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) – responsible for the development of the national Training Packages;

Tourism Training Australia - national ITAB responsible for the national implementation of the hospitality and tourism training packages;

Tourism Training Victoria - state ITAB responsible for managing the national training framework at a local level;

Department of Employment, Training and Tertiary Education (ETTE) – implements state government policy in employment and training of cookery students;

State Training Board (STB) – manages the state training system;

Australian Culinary Federation (Victorian Chapter) – represents industry professionals;

Victorian Cookery Educators Network – represents commercial cookery teachers in the State training system;

Victorian Hospitality Educators Network – represents Hospitality and Tourism managers at state RTOs;

Australasian Guild of Professional Chefs – represents professional chefs and associate members nationally;

Victorian Caterer's and Restaurant Association – represents the interests of business proprietors in the hospitality industry;

Education and training providers, generally – influence scope of study, techniques employed and development of commercial cookery courses;

New Apprenticeship Centres – manage the employment and training plans for apprentices within the industry;

Group Training Companies – responsible for training commercial cookery students;

Australian Defence Forces (ADF) – represents a major consumer of commercial cookery training on a national level;

Magazine publishers and media generally – influence trends in cookery;

Institute Horticultural Development – conducts research and development in horticulture for the state of Victoria;

CSIRO – Agribusiness section conducts research in the manufacture, packaging and distribution of foods; safety through the food chain; and nutrition;

Food Science Australia – provides assistance to food manufacturers and producers;

Food Victoria – state government body responsible for promoting food industry development;

Victorian Primary Industries Training Board – identifies training needs for the Primary Industry sector;

Australian Specialty Cheesemakers Association – makers of specialty and farmhouse cheeses;

Australian Dairy Corporation – promotes and markets Australian dairy products locally and internationally;

Australian Dairy Industry Council – represents all interests involved in dairy production and manufacture;

Dairy Research and Development Corporation – promotes dairy innovation and development;

National Food Industry Training Council – national IATB covering the food processing industry;

National Foods – Australia’s largest publicly listed dairy company.

Bonlac Foods Ltd. - leading Australian dairy foods manufacturer;

Heinz Watties Australasia – large producer and exporter of food products;

Yarra Valley Regional Food Group – promotes regional food production in the Yarra Valley region;

Department of State and Regional Development, Victoria - offer services to assist firms - large and small - to develop and grow in Victoria;

University of Melbourne, Gilbert Chandler Institute – provides education and training in food processing and manufacturing;

2.4 The Aim of the Fellowship and its sponsors

The ISS Institute/TAFE Fellowship was sponsored by the State Training Board, Victoria.

2.5 Skills Gap

Definition

The genesis of my initial application for an ISS Institute Fellowship came through discussions with apprentices, restaurant owners and operators and colleagues involved in cookery education. As a strategy to ensure I remained objective, I actively consulted with these groups to assist the planning process for my study trip abroad.

The Tourism Training Victoria Strategic Training Report states that the shortage of chefs is an issue of national concern. TTV in conjunction with the Cooks Employment Forum, a group of key cookery industry and training professionals, is actively addressing this key industry training issue. It is against this background that I identified gaps in skills and knowledge in the commercial cookery sector.

The shortage of chefs is a macro issue that requires structural change to improve. But there is a general perception that the skills of today's graduating commercial cookery students are not sufficient for them to remain in the industry on a permanent basis. We suffer from a particularly high turnover of staff within this industry sector and I intended to use my proposed study to examine how to arrest this significant development.

Today's chef requires a set of skills, knowledge and attitudes that will enable him or her to create a workplace that is stable and harmonious. The lack of stability in the hospitality industry is well known and documented. A key gap in skills and knowledge in this area is, in my view, "people management". The Cooks Employment Strategy Paper prepared by TTV identifies human resource management as a key trend and, interestingly enough, a key issue. The presence of trained staff with the requisite skills in this area would, in my opinion, help limit the high turnover of staff experienced by many enterprises throughout the industry. It would also provide an antidote to the common perception that the hospitality industry is not a good permanent career opportunity.

Currently, there is no master-level programme in commercial cookery that develops the capacities of the most-capable commercial cooks (current students and/or industry-based employees) into fully-fledged professionals capable of administering all aspects of kitchen management. There is a training qualification at a Certificate 4 level in commercial cookery but it is not being offered by any training institutes in Victoria. The fact that the qualification exists but non one is offer it raises questions about the perception of this qualification and higher-level

culinary training in the industry, in particular with commercial cooks completing the statutory three-year programme currently on offer in the STS.

Challenging and changing the perception of the wider community and the industry about the role and function of the master chef – who is he and why do we need him?

The full effect of the change to Training Packages is yet to be fully realised but anecdotal evidence would suggest that this has not been a change in the best interests of skilling our workforce and developing the commercial cookery sector. The rejection of curriculum-based courses in favour of assessment-driven training programmes and competence-based education has undoubtedly led to a certain level of deskilling in many of the training programs offered through the TAFE sector to our young people. We should be alarmed at this situation and develop strategies to ensure the level of skilling does not slide any further downwards. A recent report prepared under the Federal Government's National Industry Skills Program suggests that "country's hospitality and tourism industry is facing a culinary crisis" (see appendix).

Another element in my original application addressed the area of food product development and in particular regional food product development. After discussion with the Executive Director of the ISS Institute, whose input and observations about my application and proposed study were invaluable, we decided to concentrate on regional food production and models of human resource management.

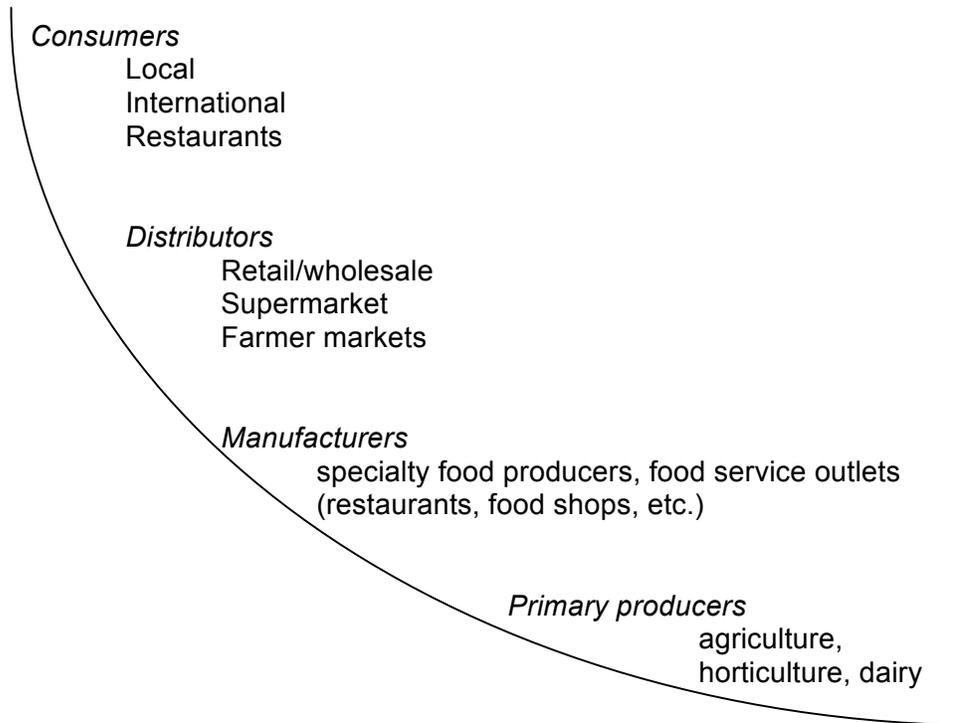
As I stated in my report "culinary professionals today are frequently called to give advice to food manufacturers about food items (both raw and processed) and their potential in developing new products for the ever-increasing food markets both here in Victoria, nationally and internationally". In order to achieve this outcome we need to provide commercial cooks with the skills to work with different people in the Food-Production Chain.

Traditionally in Australia, regional food producers have worked in isolation producing goods and selling them to a market that was happy to consume the good as supplied. But consumers have become much more aware of the types of goods available and are seeking new products that reflect the area where they were produced. With the declining market for primary produce and the ever-increasing competition from cheaper imports, it is time for Australia to look at how primary producers work together and how we can develop regional food products that utilise the services (and/or products) of several partners thereby delivering benefits to more than one enterprise.

There are several popular food trails throughout Australia that provide real benefits for the local populations where they are located. We are fortunate to have areas with an abundance of natural resources to continue developing unique trails for almost every region. The development of these trails is firmly

based in the development of the product and so this is where we need to commence training or providing skills. For example, what type of product to choose? Who will assist in providing other products essential for the manufacturing process? These are just two questions that form part of the process to develop this burgeoning market in Australia.

Food Production Supply Chain



Consequently, employment in the food production/processing area has become a new choice for many commercial cookery professionals after qualification. The development of regional food trails is evidence of the continuing demand for new and innovative food products for local and international consumption. There is a need to provide training in all areas of commercial food production for commercial cookery students who want to move from the traditional hospitality areas of kitchen food production into the hybrid hospitality/food-processing sector.

Branding, marketing and exporting our locally-made products are crucial to on-going development of the regional food production industry. Creating opportunities for export and ensuring smooth distribution are two key areas in the Supply Chain and this industry can always improve performance through innovation to find creative solutions and develop new markets for our products.

3.0 THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

3.1 Introduction

I intended to explore: 1) aspects of commercial cookery training, both private/public, to examine the pathways into master-level training; and 2) skills gaps in food production and management including regional areas. One of my principal aims was to investigate the potential for developing master-level training in Australia within the commercial cookery sector based on my field research in Italy during the June/July period and ongoing communication with international and national colleagues.

I sourced the leading providers of culinary training in the private & public sectors in several regions of Italy: Lombardia, Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria, and Rome and the Lazio region. Prior to our departure we made contact with the relevant individuals in each, we provided them with background material about our proposed visit and, in some cases, we spoke directly with administrators and educators before departing Australia.

As regards public education in Italy, the academic year concludes in mid June and so I had free access to many people involved in the commercial cookery training sector. Unfortunately, I was unable to speak directly with students in some institutions because they were preparing for their final exams.

My trip began in Milano and then we moved progressively through the central-northern part of Italy taking in the cities of Brescia, Verona, Mantova and Parma. In the second part of my study trip, I concentrated on visiting locations in Tuscany.

3.2 Educational institutions/host organisations

Isitituto Professionale Servizi Alberghiere della Ristorazione “Amerigo Vespucci”.

IPSSAR “Amerigo Vespucci” is one of two *scuole alberghiere* in Milano which have the responsibility for providing training for students wishing to enter the culinary profession in the areas of cookery, food and beverage service, conference management and hotel management.

The organisation consists of a president, vice-president, teaching and support staff. The curriculum for IPSSARs is determined by the central, state education ministry. There is some scope for individual institutions to develop areas of expertise that can take advantage of locality and/or regional activity. (For example, Milano has a vibrant event/congress sector and “Amerigo Vespucci” takes advantage of this commercial activity in the city by arranging work-based learning opportunities for its students.

“Amerigo Vespucci” has a student population of approximately 2000. Of that figure, 400 students study the commercial cookery programme. The institute is oversubscribed and is currently undergoing major refurbishment that will extend capacity for student numbers.

The institute conducts a five-year programme which consists of two years of common studies with instruction in the three major areas of hospitality: commercial cookery, food and beverage service and front office reception/housekeeping. In the third year students select one stream for further study. This third year is the last component of compulsory study

Key issue - Funding

The funding for IPSSARs comes from a number of sources. The funding for course delivery is sourced from the national government via the Ministry of Education based in Rome. The buildings and property of the institution are funded by the Provincia di Lombardia. The commune di Milano (the Australian equivalent of local government) also contributes to the funding and on-going administration of the institution.

Analysis

The mixed-funding model provides opportunities for involvement from the local government sector, an area of government hitherto not involved directly in the development of vocational education and training. This involvement could also include, though it may not be a financial contribution, partnership activities with professional associations and organisations. In my analysis of the funding issue it is important to recognise that it may no longer be possible to rely entirely on recurrent funds from government bodies to provide high-level, skills intensive training programmes. Furthermore, it may in fact be beneficial not to seek funds

from government organisations and therefore retain autonomy over programme development and implementation.

Key issue - Facilities

Generally speaking, the institution was under resourced for the delivery of programmes for students exiting into the workforce. Although the lack of facilities did impact heavily on the quality of training because students worked in industry while studying at school. This may have been a particular strategy of the IPPSAR to limit facility development on campus and locate industry-based learning opportunities in the sector. In discussions with cookery staff it was explained that IPPSARs rely heavily on the professional cookery industry to provide what they termed they “the final elements” of the training programme. This I understood to mean “live” learning in an environment that was fully able to provide the provide the trainees with experiences and opportunities for enhancing their initial training.

Analysis

In this particular institute it was somewhat disappointing to see that the enthusiasm and professionalism of the teaching staff was not replicated in the standard and condition of the facilities. The lack of industry-standard equipment places a greater burden of the future workplaces of these students because they exit post-compulsory education without fully experiencing the environments in which they are deemed “work-ready” to enter. The onus is put on the workplace to contribute in a major way to the further training and professional development of employees. This is resource intensive for the enterprise both in terms of human resource management and physical resources such. One of the potential issues or problems I can foresee with master-level training and institutes that do not have adequate resources is that the industry will be engaging in catch up with skills acquisition.

Key issue - Professional Development for teaching staff

Teaching staff members are unable to work in their area of specialisation if they are employed as permanent teachers. One teacher I spoke to commented that it would be beneficial to have this opportunity but for the moment it was not possible. Fortunately, in Australia we do not have the same control over what teachers do in non-working time and so it is possible for our teachers to improve continually their skills and bring these skills back into teaching programmes or move outside the teaching arena.

Analysis

Currency of skills is important in the ongoing development of higher skill levels among our young commercial cookery professionals. Analysing the situation at Vespucci in terms of staff development I am happy to say that we do not have a problem with creating opportunities for our cookery trainers and teachers to improve their skills. But on reflection we still have some way to go to ensure that the skills we are seeking to pass or retain are relevant for the industry today and will meet the needs of the industry tomorrow and over the coming years. It struck me at Vespucci that they school administrators did not look outside the

curriculum or the immediate teaching environment to see what they could incorporate into their programmes to enhance the learning and develop the skills of the students.

Monday 18 June

At “ Amerigo Vespucci” my meeting began with a tour of the facilities by Prof. Laura Vasintoni (Vice President of the institution). Prof. Vasintoni explained the programmes at her college and introduced us to staff members from each of the main curriculum areas. I also met with Prof. Piera Fossati and Prof. Francesca De Pian. Professor Fossati is responsible for the “stage” programme which is a work-based learning activity all diploma students are obliged to take in their final year. Professor De Pian has responsibility for the work orientation programme at Vespucci which also forms part of the final-year diploma studies.

I discussed key issues about professional development for commercial cookery employees post qualification with Professor Lorenzo Bernardinello. Prof. Bernardinello was extremely interested in the VET system in Australia and the training of commercial cooks in our country. Like many other people I met he was impressed with the standard of the facilities in our training institutions. I understood from Prof. Bernardinello that many VET practitioners were hoping that changes would come soon to provide individual institutes with greater latitude to customise their training programmes and respond more quickly to the skills gaps in Italy. He also commented on the increasing number of “extra-communitari” (immigrants, legal and illegal) who were working in the commercial cookery sector and the effect this was having on the development of the industry.

Istituto per la Promozione della Cultura IPCA (La scuola della Cucina Italiana)

IPCA is to some extent a hybrid example of culinary training in that it provides instruction for professionals and non-professionals alike. IPCA is owned by the Quadratum Group, one of Italy's largest magazine publishing houses with an emphasis on food magazines. Consequently, the school forms part of a larger organisation that provides opportunities for professional cookery development (principally through its connections with the print media). The programme delivery of the enterprise is divided evenly between professional and non-professional courses and the enterprise also provides consultancy services for a number of large clients including the Commune di Milano, Heinz and Barilla Pasta.

The commercial cookery training section of the Quadratum group is managed by a director who is professional chef with extensive experience in the field of magazine publishing. According to Dott. Allen Bay IPCA remains the leading enterprise of its type in Italy because of its relationship with the wider Quadratum group of companies. One of the key areas IPCA is researching and presenting courses on is the development of "regional fusion" in Italian cooking.

Key issue - Il Codice della cucina italiana magazine (see appendix).

Quadratum produce a magazine on a monthly basis that is intended for industry professionals: managers, chefs, cooks, and employees. It is a high-quality, glossy magazine that includes, among other items, information on products, employment classifieds and information professional development.

Analysis

Codice magazine is unique in Italy. It has a readership of over 30,000 and is considered by many in the industry to be the best cookery publication of its type for the industry. Its scope and presentation provide an example of how print-based material can help to promote professional development and master-level programmes and it could be something that is easily replicated. No doubt *Codice* has a large market in Italy and is therefore a viably financially for the Quadratum group. A magazine of this type in Australia could become a flagship publication for helping to improve standards and promote excellence in our industry.

Currently, there are a number of state-based industry and professional association publications here in Australia but none of them have the scope of *Codice* or its national focus.

Key issue - Consultancy Activity

IPCA conducts extensive consultancy activity in the Lombardy region and in particular with the Comune di Milano. This consultancy activity arises from their position as a leading private provider of professional cookery training. The consultancy activity involves all of the staff at IPCA each contributing in his own area of expertise.

Analysis

Consultancy activity for commercial cooks is a burgeoning area and it was pleasing to see that many of the initiatives at IPCA were similar to activities I have seen in Australia. Perhaps the most interesting element was the scope of enterprises that are clients of IPCA working with companies such as Barilla to develop recipes using new products before being released for commercial sale. For professional commercial cooks such work gives them the opportunity to work closely with the producer during the pre-release period and real input into the final development of the product. This is a skill that would greatly enhance the professional life and employability of cooks and demonstrates the changing opportunities that are available today. Furthermore, it demonstrates that we need to think more creatively about the role of the commercial cook and not see his function as simply a producer of food for sale but rather as someone who has the skills to contribute to the whole process of food product development and even contribute in the food processing area.

Key issue - Expert industry professionals as teachers

The teaching staff who present the programmes at IPCA are generally sourced from outside the organisation. This provides the enterprise with a degree of flexibility to provide a broad range of suitably qualified presenters and provide relevant content for its programs.

Analysis

IPCA regularly conduct classes with expert chefs whom they invite from all over Italy. Recent activities have included courses delivered by chefs listed in the *Guida Rossa della Michelin*. For example, Bruno Barbieri from the *Locanda Solarola* in Bologna, Walter Eynard from the *Flipot* near Turin and Paolo Vai from the *Grill Royal e Golf* in Val d'Aosta. These events are only open to professional cooks and provide the opportunity for them to enhance their skills through participation in hands-on classes with master chefs. The contents of the classes are regularly featured in *Codice* magazine. There are similar programmes in some TAFEs in Australia but they are generally open to the public whereas these courses are quite specifically aimed at the professional level.

Key issue - Industry partnerships

As mentioned above, IPCA has worked with a number of high-profile Italian food companies in the development of food products and their promotion. The reciprocal relationship IPCA has developed with its industry partners extends to the *Codice* magazine and other areas of the Quadrata group's activities.

Analysis

Industry partnerships are an integral activity at IPCA and a main source of non-recurrent funding for the cookery training activities. The results of their partnerships can be seen in the consultancy activities they provide but also in their teaching programmes where industry groups provide equipment and product for use at the enterprise. These partnerships are exclusive to IPCA who

devote not inconsiderable attention to maintaining the relationship. IPCA can offer a level of exposure that many other similar institutions cannot because of its links with its parent company.

Tuesday 19 June

I spent the morning at IPCA with Dott. Allan Bay, director of IPCA. IPCA is located in the Piazza Aspromonte and occupies a floor of the building that houses all the Quadratum group activities.

After our initial discussion, Dott. Bay took me on a tour of the facilities. IPCA has two training kitchens and small training restaurant. I was fortunate to see a class in progress and talk briefly with the cookery teacher involved in the activity. Our post-tour discussions concentrated on what he termed “regional fusion”, a term I was previously unaware of, and its impact for commercial cookery students. In essence his argument is that there isn’t an Italian cuisine as such but a mixture of different types of cooking that derive from different regions. At the conclusion of our meeting, Dott. Bay provided with me with samples of *Codice* magazine and other cookery publications of the Quadratum group and course information and brochures on activities at IPCA.

Case Study

One the night of June 18 I ate in a well-known restaurant in Milan called // *Cavallino*. In the course of my dinner I spoke with the waiter about the current state of hospitality training in the city and his impressions about the standard of trained employees entering the industry. He had worked in the same restaurant for 18 years and began in the bar as an assistant barman before working in the dining room, he is currently a senior waiter. In his opinion he thought that newly-trained employees entered the workplace with an unreal expectation in that they wanted to commence at a relatively senior position rather than commence at a lower position and work their way up through the business, developing their skills and learning on the job. In other words, it seems, according to this waiter, the new employees think their training has finished once they have finished formal studies at the *scuole alberghieri*. In my opinion this problem resonates with experiences in Australia.

CAST Alimenti Centro Arte, Scienza e Tecnologia Dell'Alimento

CAST Alimento is a privately operated facility that was established through the partnership of four professional pastry chefs who felt there was a need to establish a private training school. One of the aims of CAST Alimenti is to conduct courses with the leading practitioners of culinary and pastry arts from Italy, Europe and the United States of America.

CAST Alimenti is situated in Brescia and the institution is located within an industrial zone of the outskirts of the city where other enterprises associated with the food service industry have their showrooms and factories. This proximity to suppliers and manufacturers provides CAST with the opportunity to remain fully abreast of the latest developments in food production technology and product development. Furthermore, the combination of training institute and associated partners presents scope for master-level training for chefs with the latest equipment (sometimes even before the machine has been made available generally).

Fundamentally, CAST's purpose is to develop the arts of cooking and pastry making by providing chefs and cooks who have completed the obligatory diploma in a Scuola Alberghiere or similar with access to the best in the field. In order to achieve this the director constantly sources new practitioners from around Europe and develops new courses that respond to the training needs of the Italian food service industry. CAST has developed excellent links with all the important culinary associations in Italy and Europe. For example, one of the directors, Igenio Massari, is one of only three Italian members of the Relais de Patisserie.

CAST produces a series of exceptional cookbooks of the highest calibre. The recipes of the books are developed and produced within the institute and incorporate material in teaching practice and activities.

Industry partnerships are significant for CAST. These relationships are both formal and informal. For example, product trials with by cookery teaching staff or product demonstration by company representatives who purchase training time at CAST.

Key issues and analysis

Skill level of teaching staff

All staff delivering classes at CAST as noted as the very best in their particular stream. This proved a beneficial tool in the marketing of both the programmes and the facility. Participants valued and respected these 'Masters' for their knowledge and felt privileged to have undertaken training with such professionals. All teaching staff had completed the equivalent of a formal apprenticeship, followed by advanced skill training. During their training it was conducted in many instances 'on the job' in leading kitchens. Small class sizes

provided the opportunity for a constant exchange of knowledge and skill from teacher to student

Remuneration of teaching staff

It was interesting that at no stage did any teaching staff member disclose their remuneration or package. On observation one could assume that in order to maintain the high profile of CAST, incentives would be generous for all teaching staff. Many 'Masters' travelled from destinations outside of Italy and were regularly involved in the delivery of cookery courses at CAST throughout the year. Travel and accommodation costs would also form part of their individual package.

Flexibility of teaching staff

As four of the Directors are involved in the delivery of class material they teach a greater proportion of programmes. Other 'Masters' come directly from industry which provides promotional opportunities for such teachers and their respective businesses. Programmes were planned according to teacher availability. Some teaching staff owned and operated most reputable businesses themselves and chose to teach at CAST while leaving staff to run their operations. This would indicate that teaching staff enjoyed their working environment and experiences at CAST. To a degree flexibility was limited as programmes relied on 'specialist' skills. Teachers with a broad-based qualification would not be able to teach an advanced class in margarine modelling or ice-carving.

Vision of the master chef

In Italy, the 'Master' Chef is someone who has a specialist skill qualification in addition to a base cookery qualification (Australian equivalent AQF4). Years of experience in their area of expertise see many of these professionals in high profile positions in reputable establishments or in their own business. Such a skill base opens up many opportunities for employment, but also promotes greater job satisfaction through the acquisition of these specialist skills

Contributions of associations for maintaining skills & sponsorship

To the participants undertaking training at CAST, the facilities are without a doubt the very best. Kitchens are fitted with specialist equipment and in most cases these have been funded or supplied through sponsorship agreements with industry bodies. An agreement allowing industry to use facilities for training external industry personnel in exchange for the equipment has been made. This also allows students and staff to be exposed to 'cutting edge' techniques and applications relating to such equipment. This benefits all parties concerned, keeping costs down, skills relevant and relationships with industry cohesive.

Professional Development activities

As discussed, many CAST teachers are directly involved in industry. With them they bring current industry experience and a highly marketable profile. Industry professionals and staff at CAST are provided a unique opportunity to work directly with industry representatives at the frontline of technological advancement. This opportunity would not normally be available to them as in

many instances such equipment is not yet marketed. Such networks have proved invaluable to CAST and its economic viability. Staff has the opportunity to be involved in the writing of textbooks, which are used in classes and sold worldwide. Due to the diversity of skill evident amongst teaching staff at CAST, informal exchange of knowledge and skill occurs.

Wednesday 19 June

I travelled to Brescia and met Vittorio Santoro, Director of CAST Alimenti. Signor Santoro and I spent the morning discussing a variety of issues and ideas. It was a very fruitful meeting. Following our meeting I was invited to have lunch with the students and staff at the institution and then I was taken on a tour of the facility where I saw classes in action and met with teachers. The following day I spent the morning at CAST observing classes and product demonstration sessions in two of specialist kitchen classrooms. I also met Achille Zoia, one of Italy's master pastry chefs, and administrators at the institution.

Unità Formativa Polifunzionale Centro di Formazione Professionale Regione Lombardia (CFPL)

The CFPL is the regional provider of vocational education and training in Lombardy. It is situated in the city of Mantova and draws students from all over the region. The centre provides courses in the following vocational areas: agriculture and horticulture, hospitality and tourism, automotive studies, transport and warehousing, graphic arts, commerce, office administration, information technology, biotechnology, ecology and personal services. All the courses are taught on the one campus in the centre of the city.

CFPLs are currently managed through regional government bodies with direction from the national government via ministerial bodies such as the Ministry of Public Education. The curriculum content of the courses follows the national guidelines but there is scope at the regional level to develop program material and content suitable to the local environment. For example, the centre runs a tourism course that concentrates on the Mantova region, a very popular destination for international visitors, and its food and wine-making traditions.

Key Issue - Teaching programmes

The centre offers three courses in the commercial cookery area: basic cookery qualification, advanced cookery qualification and professional refresher program. Centre has excellent facilities and equipment. The practical restaurant classes are not allowed to be offered to the public by law, which means the “customers” are students and staff. As the peak training venue for the region it is surprising not to see a high-level course for post-qualified commercial cooks. As a regional centre, the CFPL is obliged to draw its students from all over the region which means there are students with different learning needs and desired outcomes. The courses are structured to provide a common delivery for students but it is a challenge to ensure all students reach a sufficient level of competence.

Analysis

The types of programs, class sizes and outcomes for students are similar to Australia, most obviously in our TAFE sector. In the view of the director and the teaching staff, the high teacher to student ratio has an impact on the quality of training that can only be ameliorated by lowering the ratio. Although the client groups differ in the region, for example professionals wishing to improve skills and employment opportunities and mature-age students wishing to move in to the commercial cookery sector, the courses available are structured in such a way that leads to a particular level of skill. Consequently, at a regional level there is a glass ceiling, so to speak, that prevents further enhancement of commercial cookery skills

Key issue - Proposed Educational reform programme

Vocational education and training is undergoing major reform in Italy currently which will have a significant impact on the future development of commercial cookery training as with other vocational areas. The internal reform will be combined with EU reforms that are intended to come into place sometime in the next two years.

Analysis

The current reform underway in Italy under the auspices of the Ministry of Education is proposing to shift responsibility from the regional government bodies to the provincial government bodies. A Victorian equivalent of such a change might be for ETTE to relinquish its involvement in training management which is then replaced by large, local government bodies something roughly equivalent to a municipality such as the City of Stonnington. Dott. Pietrini remarked that the proposed change would have a serious impact on the independence of the institutions such as his because they function as regional colleges and accept students from throughout the region rather than only within the *provincia*.

Key issue - Opportunity for master-level training program.

Because of the small size of CFPL there is limited scope currently for a master-level program to be conducted on site in Mantova. Although the intended reforms are designed to give further scope to institutions to develop programs they believe will increase the skills of people in designated vocational areas. Some of the issues that rise out of planning a master-level program include: sourcing suitably qualified staff, providing access to industry-based learning, resourcing programs at a level that will provide appropriate outcomes and involving industry professionals and associations in planning and provision of training.

Analysis

The CFPL intends to plan further courses for commercial cookery training although nothing will happen in the short-term future due to the educational reform mentioned earlier. The intended changes would seek to equip commercial cooks with the skills necessary for kitchen management. The current intention is to deliver a two-year diploma in Gastronomia that would follow on from the four-year Diploma offered at the various IPPSARs in the larger cities throughout Italy. Dott. Pietrini recognised the need to improve the skills of the current generation of commercial cooks and said there was a chronic shortage of cooks and chefs in Italy at the moment. As mentioned earlier, many people currently working in Italian professional kitchens are *extra-communitari*, people of non-Italian origin working without official status as employees.

Friday 22 June

I was greeted at the CFPL by Professor Giuliano Pietrini (Vice-Director). After presenting the aims and goals of my study trip I was taken on a tour of the centre

and met staff from the commercial cookery section and also teacher from other discipline areas such as personal services and information technology. I had been given the name of Professor Pietrini by the Vice-President of IPSSAR Vespucci in Milan and I explained how I had visited that institute two days prior. Professor Pietrini was pleased that the regional bodies had been able to offer me the opportunity to contribute their experience to my study trip.

In the kitchens and restaurant I was introduced to Dottoressa Donatella Franchini who is the head of the cookery section. She and I had a very fruitful exchange about our respective programs and the issues that were most important to us as vocational education and training practitioners.

Professor Pietrini entertained me in the training restaurant with local wine and Mantovan pastry specialties as we discussed further the implications of the reforms and the current state of professional cookery training in Italy. One of the main concerns about the proposed EU reforms was the "homogenisation" of training with the introduction of a common cookery qualification throughout EU member states. According to Dott. Pietrini such a program would not recognise the unique culinary traditions of each region in Italy let alone the diverse cooking styles and traditions throughout countries such as France, Spain and Great Britain.

Senga Agriturismo

Agriturismo as the name suggests is a combination of agricultural activity and tourism and is a very popular concept in the regional and rural areas of central and northern Italy. Provincial governments have responsibility for managing the promotion and development of *agriturismo* enterprises and generally produce excellent brochures that include information about the enterprises in the region involved in this activity. The level and type of service provided by members of the networks in the regions differ depending on the commercial activity of the particular enterprise. During my study trip I visited a site outside Mantua, *Senga Agriturismo*. This region is referred to as the “food bowl” of Italy and boasts some of the best and most well-known food products in the country.

Senga Agriturismo is located approximately 30 kilometres south of Mantua in the Po Valley. The owners farm cattle and pork, cereals, vegetable crops, apples and pears. Perhaps the most interesting element of the enterprise is the restaurant that operates at the farm. It is a 50-seat venue and is open to the public all year round. One the day I visited there was a wedding function in progress which occupied the principal room and I sat in a smaller room which is intended for overflow on busy days such as the day I visited Senga.

The menu of the restaurant concentrates on local specialties and nearly all of the produce cooked and served comes from the farm. Local people and members of the family run the farm staff the kitchen. In the non-peak periods of operation Senga produces a range of preserved food products such as jams and marmalades, mustard fruits, tomato sauces and puree, pickled vegetables and vegetables in oil. Once again, all the products are grown on the farm and processed at the farm.

Within areas of agricultural wealth in Italy, local governments have taken on the initiative to form a body to provide greater opportunities to both large & small producers. The concept is supported by an impressive information portfolio, which consists of maps and information relating to the facilities of businesses. This publication is available throughout Italy and targets both local and international visitors.

Such an initiative has provided an opportunity for large and small farmers/producers to be more economically viable by broadening their marketplace. According to the produce being grown at each venue, restaurants, dining rooms and small stores have been created on location. Traditional skills that have been passed down within the family unit have been adapted according to the produce on hand to create a range of exciting value-added products.

Key Issue - Local food products

One of the key features of this enterprise is its commitment to locally-grown products. There is no menu as such in the restaurant, clients are simply told of the day's list of dishes. The list changes according to the season and is not as extensive as one would expect in larger cities such as Mantua or Cremona.

Analysis

Perhaps the most impressive element of Senga's operation is the owners' commitment to the local produce. In all their publicity material they emphasise the local provenance of their menu items and structure their menus to satisfy using the farm as the principal source of goods. In Australia, there would be very few if any enterprises that operate in a similar fashion and bearing in mind the second component of the skills gaps discussed in 2.5 perhaps this is a model of farm enterprise we should be investigate for our local hospitality and tourism markets. Enterprises such as *Senga Agriturismo* can provide the environment for enhancing the skills of commercial cooks at the higher-skill levels through working with produce at its place of origin. Such exposure may lead to further skill development in the are menu creation and regional food product development.

Key issue - Networking the local environment

As mentioned earlier local inhabitants staff the enterprise. This has a number of benefits for the business and ensures that the regional focus of the enterprise remains intact. It also ensures that local knowledge, skills and traditions are maintained through the support of a commercial enterprise which eventually delivers benefits to the whole of the regional community.

Analysis

As mentioned above in key issue 2 above, networking local communities through co-operative enterprises such as *Senga Agriturismo* can provide a number of benefits for the local population. It is obvious that the basis of such enterprises is the food prepared and presented in the restaurant (the "product" so to speak) and we need to recognise the importance of suitably skilled and qualified commercial cooks to manage these types of enterprises successfully. Some the skills that would be required by commercial cooks wishing to enter this area include: advanced product knowledge specific to geographical area, knowledge of agricultural methods and traditions of the area, developing partnerships with local producers, assisting producers to develop new goods and promoting and marketing food products on the basis of their regional origin. These skills do necessarily form part of any particular training course and therefore we have gaps in these skills in regional and rural areas in Australia.

Key issue - Location

In addition to guide publications available to visitors there is an obvious need for improved signage to further promote this concept to a wider audience.

Considering the location of many of these facilities is remote, a more visual enticement from main road access would build on existing client groups.

Within Australia many regional food groups and trails are being initiated, based on the European model. Some examples are the Yarra Valley Regional Food Group and the Gippsland Gourmet Trail. It has allowed for smaller producers to be given greater exposure for their product and a regional identity.

Analysis

The operating model of *Senga Agriturismo* is one of local cooperation. It is a very good example of the “cottage industry” type enterprises that have been one of the key elements in Italy’s economic success over the last forty years. The model relies on local people forming loose alliances to share good and services to retain economic benefits within the local communities. It is a model that does not immediately find a home in the Anglo-Saxon method of doing business and represents a set of skills that we could appropriate to great benefit in our regional communities.

Key issue - Facilities

Prior to ‘Agriturismo’ opportunities, facilities were farms, processing sheds and barns, many in various states of repair. Facilities can be purpose built according to the type of food production. Government grants and incentives have allowed for facilities to be up-graded to meet legislative compliance. Through observation, it can be said that laws relating to Food Safety are more relaxed than those in Australia. Although Government grants are available to agricultural producers in Australia, such funding is not available to small regional producers of food items.

Analysis

The relationship between government and local producers provides a platform for improved services to the general public and to small business. All stakeholders benefit from such initiatives, through improved economic viability and a reputation for the provision of quality product. A sense of regional identity is important to producers and this leads to an opportunity to network with others and to share resources. *e.g.*, expensive equipment.

Key issue - Staff skill gaps

Children are exposed to the family traditions and business from a very early age in Italy. They serve an informal apprenticeship within the home, under the guidance of their parents, grandparents and siblings. In instances such as the ‘Agriturismo’ project, staff across all areas of farming, food processing, food production and food service are family members. With such a change in focus and direction of these businesses skill gaps are evident. Also due to the remote location of many of these establishments external training activity is not considered a priority for economic viability within the broader tourism industry.

Analysis

Training providers need to embrace flexible delivery strategies to create customised training for employees within these facilities. These could be delivered within the workplace to further enhance existing skills, raising them to a more professional level. Government needs to provide initiatives for staff training, making education more accessible to such employees. Fee for service activity through workshops relating to areas of interest would also prove beneficial to each region. It would seem that educational establishments within Italy have not yet identified small business as a viable market, especially at a local level. Many educational facilities have developed working agreements with large national corporations where training is delivered in the traditional classroom environment.

Although within Australia, TAFEs and private providers have identified opportunities in this area, it has become more evident that there is a growing demand for further activity. Those commonly involved in small business do not necessarily come from a cookery, hospitality, tourism or business background. Constant changes in government legislation and foodservice styles are often daunting for regional operators.

Saturday 23 June

I drove to *Senga Agriturismo* in the morning after leaving Verona. Unfortunately the owners of the enterprise, Luciana Filotta and Luigi Beduschi, were absent on the day I visited but I managed to have a very interesting discussion with several of the staff working in the restaurant and much of the material described above comes from our discussions.

Biemme SRL

Biemme SRL has its base in Parma, a zone rich in food specialties and a long tradition of fine eating and food production. Biemme is a leading producer of Parmesan cheese and associated products in the Emilia-Romagna region. The company operates a cheese processing facility outside Parma and maintains a cheese storage facility where the cheeses are matured during the final stages prior to commercial sale. The company has clients all over the world including Australia, Japan and Great Britain.

Parmigiano Reggiano and Grana Padano are two of Italy's best known food products. True parmesan cheese is produced in a particular geographical region and its production is highly regulated. The cheese must satisfy particular tests to receive the approval of the governing body or *consorzio*. As a regional product, parmesan cheese is one the most recognisable brands in the world. Many cheese companies outside the region, and outside the country, produce a cheese that is marketed as parmesan but bears little resemblance to the real product. To protect the unique quality of the true Parmesan cheese the *consorzio* has developed strict guidelines for its production, which include elements such as feed, water, breed of cow and length of maturity.

Key issue - Regional food production and local employment

The Italian economic model relies heavily on a "cottage-industry" approach in which several entities with something in common contribute to the production of goods for sale. The parmesan cheese industry centred in Parma is a clear example of this model and as such provides useful information for the analysing its applicability to Australia.

Analysis

The importance of building partnerships between suppliers in the food chain of regional food production cannot be underestimated if local and/or regional food producers are to maintain vibrant local communities. The model mentioned above that operates in Italy provides an interesting case study for the Australian experience and offers the opportunity to compare and contrast methods of production and models of co-operation. In Australia we have had a long tradition of the co-operatives in the primary produce sector. These co-operatives assisted farmers to find markets for their products by providing a one-stop service: processing and manufacturing, packaging, promotion and sale. With the advent of large, multi-national companies acquiring co-operatives, it would appear that this system has broken down and that we need to recapture the models of co-operation once existing.

The Italian model is vibrant and can often involve more than one community in the production of a final product. In the case of what I experienced with Biemme SRL different members of the one family contributed to the processing and manufacturing of parmesan cheese. The company also had partnerships with

farmers and processors in the region to guarantee a constant supply of primary product. Given the high price paid for parmesan cheese as a commodity (it is possible in Parma to borrow against cheese rounds) all the partners in the process, dairy farmer, cheese maker, etc., are committed to ensuring the high standard of production is maintained. The close connections between the partners in the Italian model provide a solid foundation for the ongoing success of the venture, be it cheese, smallgoods or processed foods, due to the intimacy that exists between the partners and the quick response with which they can address problems or issues.

Key issue - Maintaining the artisan element in regional food production

The technique for making parmesan cheese has changed very little over the centuries. The most obvious changes have been in the machinery that has been developed to assist the cheese-making process rather than change the way it is made. The net effect of maintaining the traditions of artisan production has been to raise the quality of this particular cheese into a class of its own.

Analysis

Artisan food production

The defining feature of an artisan food product is the quality of its ingredients and production. This need not necessarily mean the product is prohibitively expensive but it does mean that it will not reach mass markets. The role of the artisan food producer brings its own challenges when he or she wants to increase market share in a pre-existing location or develop new markets in other locations. From my experience in the Parma I was impressed by the commitment of the cheese producers to limit the quantity of cheese produced and ensure they produced an excellent product all the time. Artisan food production brings with it its own challenges because food producers are working with a living product and there is always an element of risk that can adversely affect the final product. In Parma there is a strict method for ensuring that the cheese round is ready for the next stage and can receive the mark of the *consorzio*. The commitment to restrained levels of production to ensure the product retains its artisan status is a good example of the co-operative model mentioned above. Furthermore, it demonstrates that maintaining the high standards necessary can be used as a marketing and promotion tool in the commercial market.

Key issue - Value-adding to regional products

Biemme SRL creates a range of parmesan cheese products for world-wide sale. Their clients include Marks and Spencer in Great Britain, a number of high-end supermarket chains in Japan and leading cheese importers in the United States of America. The many products that can be created from the basic round of parmesan cheese demonstrate clearly that value-adding is a great source of economic benefit for the primary producer. It is not difficult to see how one can extrapolate from the parmesan cheese example and develop strategies for

regional food producers to enhance the commercial success of their products through value-adding.

Analysis

Value-adding is important for regional food producers because it increases the commercial viability of their product through greater market share. It also delivers benefits to the Australian economy because it means that the goods, if they are exported, leave the country in their final condition and producers receive the financial reward rather than selling raw product which is then processed and none of the benefits returning to the producer of the original product. Biemme SRL produces a range of value-added products for Marks and Spencer in Great Britain. The company regularly provides Marks and Spencer with new samples of products. They take the lead by suggesting product rather than responding to requests from their clients. The model of value-adding can be extended to any food business and already in Australia there are some interesting examples of value-adding in the regional food production sector. What is required is an increase in the awareness of the possibilities of value-adding to ensure as many producers as possible to develop a value-adding component to their primary food processing or production.

I think we can learn a great deal from the Italian methods of value-adding particularly in the specialty cheese area. But first we need to create products that are marketable and capable of being value-added. We are fortunate to have “clean and green” primary producers who can supply the makers with raw products but we also need to educate consumers about the benefits of specialty products.

Sunday 24 June

On the Sunday afternoon I visited the cheese magazines of Biemme SRL and met the director of the business Alberto Bianchi. Alberto took me through the magazines and explained the complete process for producing the cheese. In the last section of the tour I had a look at the processing area of the magazine where the cheese is processed into different products: grated, shaved, small pieces, etc. I also met Monica Bianchi, Alberto’s wife, who is responsible for the financial management of Biemme SRL.

Monday 25 June

On this day I visited a cheese-making facility on the outskirts of Parma and then proceeded to a farm owned by Signor Bianchi to the dairy management element of the cheese-making process. The visit concluded with lunch in a local *trattoria* where we ate, what else, local parmesan with a pasta dish.

Apicius – Lorenzo di Medici Institute (Florence)

Apicius – Lorenzo di Medici Institute is named after Marcus Gavio (25 BC-?), named Apicius, who was expert of gastronomy in antiquity. His work *De Re Coquinaria* is the most important cooking treatise in Latin. It reveals the evolution of taste in terms of foods and lifestyle of the Roman upper classes up until the fall of Empire. The school is located in the vibrant San Lorenzo quarter and draws students from all over the world for its professional and non-professional cooking courses. The school has close links with numerous west and east coast universities in the United States of America and provides opportunities for students to complete liberal arts subjects that count towards their American degree studies. The school also conducts a significant Italian language programme

For the purposes of ISS Institute study trip I was particularly interested in the professional cookery programme and the outcomes this provided for students both Italy and their countries of origin. I was also interested to see to what extent the courses catered for people wishing to extend their skills to the master level. The school has a variety of facilities for its programme including a wine studies room located the cellar basement of the principle medieval building. Cookery classes are taught in a number rooms each organised to provide the appropriate learning space and environment. The school awards a diploma for the professional cookery course that is recognised by the Italian state. All of the courses are full-fee paying and there is no state funding for any of Apicius' educational activities.

Key Issue - Length of study programmes and teaching staff

Suprisingly for a professional cookery programme, the course at Apicius is rather short. The professional cookery programme is semester-length and is offered twice a year. Its Australian equivalent would be a course at AQF level 2, which we would not accept as sufficient for entry into the upper levels of professional cookery qualification. The programme at Apicius is divided into modules that cover the various elements of a traditional culinary training syllabus or curriculum. The content of the programme covers the principle elements of Italian cuisine with an emphasis on Tuscan cooking, in particular the food of the Florentine region. All of the teaching staff in the professional cookery programme continue to work in industry and teach on a limited basis at the school. Teaching staff are engaged to teach on a unit-by-unit basis which ensures that they maintain relevant skills and industry experience.

Analysis

Notwithstanding the length of the professional cookery course at Apicius, its basic structure and content offer several interesting comparisons with the current state of culinary training in Australia and provide scope for developing the idea of a master-level programme to reverse the skills decline we are currently experiencing. The shorter training period (6-8 months) in a professional cookery course can be offset against an intense learning programme that concentrates on

skill acquisition at a higher level. The programmes at Apicius are no doubt enhanced by the professional experience of the teaching staff. The industry-based activity of the teachers influences their training-based activity (i.e., at the school) and delivers quality teaching for students who have paid a significant amount of money to enter the course and naturally have high expectations of the teaching staff and institution. The flexibility offered to the school by employing professionals as teachers is also worth stating and will be explored further in the final section of the report.

Key issue - Opportunities for industry-based learning

Concurrent with the studies at Apicius, all students are expected to work a certain amount of hours in a Florentine restaurant. The programme co-ordinators at Apicius are responsible for arranging work-based learning opportunities and work closely with professional organisations in Florence to organise placements. Increasingly, it is difficult for students to be placed in work-based learning situations because of government legislation and insurance requirements that place a heavy burden on host organisations.

Analysis

Industry-based learning is a key element of any serious training initiative and needs to be restated in the current climate where young commercial cooks still technically in training are working in situations that militate against skill and professional development. All too often one hears of third or fourth-year apprentices being placed in positions of responsibility. The reasons for this sort of promotion has less to do with genuine recognition of skills in the workplace (technical and managerial) than it does with financial concerns about wages and operating costs. The effect of these problems can be seen in the difficulty many businesses have with retaining staff. Industry-based learning that is based on the principle of the master/apprentice transaction of skill acquisition and learning has long been an important feature in the commercial cookery sector but has suffered recently due to the not insignificant financial burdens many commercial cookery enterprises currently endure. The industry-based learning component of the courses at Apicius is interesting because the student is not paid for time spent working in the kitchen. In a sense, this is an old method of training that has some benefits but is perhaps unworkable and not practical in the current climate. Having said that there it is worth stating that the opportunity for younger industry members to experience working with master-level members and not requiring employment as a corollary of gaining new skills has something to recommend it.

Key issue - Complimentary study programmes

One of the key elements of the professional cookery programme at Apicius is the complimentary food-related studies that are included in the course with the general culinary training. This material includes wine studies that explore the Tuscan region. Studies in this area also include wine and food matching and site visits to vineyards. There is also learning opportunities based around Tuscany's

excellent reputation for regional food products and the history and development of Italian cuisine.

Analysis

Complimentary studies programmes, such as at Apicius, can provide a wider set of skills for the professional commercial cook. At Apicius, the school concentrates on complimentary programmes that are food related. This could be developed to include the so-called “soft skills” such as human resource management and time management. In my initial application I discussed the lack of a training programme that provided skills to equip the commercial cook to manage every element of the kitchen production process. It would seem from my study trip that complimentary programmes are one way to address this issue.

Thursday 28 June

At Apicius I met with Joanne Maddox. Joanne is the Group Co-ordinator at the school and has responsibility for the overseas liaison and programme development. Unfortunately, the director of the Lorenzo de Medici Institute, Dottoressa Gabriella Ganugi, was not present on the day I visited the school. After a series of discussions about the school and its programmes, Joanne took me on a tour of the school and its facilities. At the conclusion of the tour I was escorted to the Florence Market in the San Lorenzo quarter and taken on a guided tour of this famous fresh food market.

Centro di Formazione Professionale Regione Toscana (CFPT)

The CFPT is the Tuscan equivalent of the of the institution I visited in Mantova. The courses offered at CFPT are similar to CFPL. The content of the cookery courses concentrated more on Tuscan cuisine and there was a specialist courses for pizza makers. Many of the topics I discussed with the director of CFPT, Dottoressa Tonti, were similar or the same as my discussions with Dott. Pietrini in Mantova.

Dott. Tonti explained the current initiative in the European Union for a common qualification in cookery. Dott. Tonti has contributed to the development of the programme and mentioned that the Union will endorse the changes in the summer and trial the new changes in the academic year 2001/2002.

Friday 29 June

I met with the director of the Centro Formazione Professionale Toscana, Dottoressa Tonti, and other teaching staff. The institute was conducting some early summer school programmes and I spent time in the kitchen classrooms observing two classes.

3.3 Outcomes of the Fellowship program

Related to the skills gaps

The opportunity to visit several different institutions involved in culinary training and regional food producers serving different markets and creating different products provided me with a broad view of the Italian experience. Furthermore, the opportunity to socialise with many of the people involved in the work of the enterprises and institutions allowed me to become, albeit for a brief period, immersed in the culture of Italian cuisine and the traditions of culinary training in Northern and Central Italy.

Based on the discussions I had with the Executive Director of the ISS Institute, there were two objectives for my study trip. One was to examine the different levels of culinary training in Italy and see what options are available for post-qualification training; and two, to visit regional food producers and explore models of cooperation. Given the length of time I had while in Italy I am pleased to say that I managed to meet a large number of people and gather extensive information.

The experience of my study trip allowed me to develop my understanding of the skills gaps mentioned in my initial application about the role of master chef and the perception of the master chef in Australia. The critical outcome now is for me to incorporate the material and experiences from my trip into an initiative that will help to close the skills gaps I have discussed throughout this report.

Key issues and analysis – lectures, workshops, field studies, study tours.

Although I listed a number of institutes on my original itinerary I was not able to visit every location due to time constraints and my trip coinciding with the end of the scholastic year. All of the people I did meet were very generous with their time and showed a very good understanding of their industry sector and the skills gaps that exist in their own country. I was pleased to see that everyone I spoke to was interested in the Australian experience and offered advice about the skills gaps I said were the focus of my study trip.

More time to visit other regional food producers would have been beneficial but given the time constraints this was not possible. I have now established firm contacts with the people I met in this sector and I look forward to further

communication about models of cooperation.

Overall it was a very positive experience. The invaluable knowledge and experience everyone shared with me included:

- Their commitment to providing excellent teaching
- The importance of maintaining links with industry
- The practice of cooking and eating in season
- The recognition of cookery as a profession and not a trade
- The commitment to partnerships and cooperative models in regional areas
- The importance of maintaining skills in the cookery profession
- The development of value-added products

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The problem

There are several reasons why the commercial cookery sector has the problems outlined in 2.2 and the skills gaps discussed in 2.5 and 3.0. Elements within the commercial cookery sector need to be modified to provide a clearer picture of the problem and solutions to closing the gaps identified in 2.5.

In Australia we have seen a fantastic increase in the number of restaurants and eating venues over the last 25 years. But this increase has not coincided with the development of a stable workforce to service the demand for hospitality products. The popular conception of cookery as a trade is being slowly broken down due to elements such as industry professionals in the media, the popularity of celebrity chefs, increased publication of cookery and magazines and a continued interest in the print media in food and hospitality generally. The working hours of the cookery profession are not easy and the conditions can sometimes be uncomfortable and this has no doubt affected the public perception of the chef's working life.

With regard to the regional food production skills gaps listed in 2.5 and 3.0, problems exist both locally and nationally. Many of the issues can be overcome through closer partnerships between everyone who contributes along the Supply Chain. Regional food production has the potential to deliver significant benefits to rural communities in the form and replace lost industries.

The problems can be summarised as follows:

- The need to create a definite career path for those suitably skilled to advance to master level
- Insufficient integration between industry and training colleagues about the training needs for today's and tomorrow's chefs
- Lack of management training for chefs in order to progress career development
- Varying perceptions of the role and value of the master chef

- Integrating regional food production as a core component of regional development planning
- Promoting food processing and manufacturing careers in urban and regional centers
- Enhancing local product and value-adding for sale locally and overseas
- Creating new products for niche markets
- Valuing and promoting regional food products as symbols of Australian culture

The Solution

Key issues that form part of the solution to the problem include:

- Curriculum development for post-qualification professional cookery courses.
 - Funding sources for accredited training.
 - Establishing an industry-based course with accreditation if required.
 - Utilising professional associations to develop training programmes.
 - Maintaining existing skill levels through training programmes that emphasis high-level practice and responsiveness to change within the commercial cookery sector.
 - Developing higher level programmes with an emphasis on management competencies (so called “soft skills”) including areas human resource management, financial control and communication.
 - Creating career progression pathways for post-qualification cooks.
 - Addressing public perceptions about cookery - trade versus profession.
-
- Choosing the right food product for the right region.
 - Gaining leverage from the natural resources of a particular area in promoting food products.
 - Developing new products and value-adding existing ones
 - Networking producers, scientists, and marketers to help develop the food industries.
 - Ensuring the “clean and green” initiative is supported throughout the Supply Chain process.
 - Marketing, branding and creating viable product differentiation, positioning, labeling and packaging.
 - Creating and maintaining partnerships/strategic alliances/associations
 - Valuing and working in an integral approach along the Supply Chain

The recommendations in summary form include:

- Establish a group of industry professionals and members drawn from professional organisations to examine the career structure of the commercial cookery sector.
- Source funds for ISS Institute to convene and industry forum.
- Participate in research activities with bodies such as the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), education sub-committees of professional organisations, ITABs
- Provide information to key government departments about the training needs of the commercial cookery sector through the relevant Industry Training Boards (ITABs).

- Plan and deliver workshops that promote the career opportunities for the commercial cookery sector. These workshops to include sufficient representation from all areas of the sector such as to provide a broad picture of the choices available.
- Develop marketing and promotional activities that emphasise the complex skills base (technical, artistic and managerial) for commercial cookery workers with the aim to counter the perception that cookery is a trade and not a profession.
- Seek opportunities for graduating commercial cooks to develop their skills by working with master chefs both in Australia and overseas. Furthermore, promote exchanges between enterprises, nationally and internationally, to enhance the skills of local commercial cooks.
- Market Australia and Melbourne in particular, as a leader in culinary training and link the excellence in training and education to the vibrant restaurant industry and culture we have at home.
- Include regional food production (history, culture) as an area of research for food processing qualifications.
- Develop opportunities for regional food groups to work with large food manufacturers to create “economies of scale” for smaller food producers.
- Establish regional food “promoters” with the task of promoting the unique qualities of a particular area and its regional products – e.g., dairy products of south Gippsland or southern New South Wales
- Seek funding from government departments, such as the Department for State and Regional Development, to present a traveling showcase of regional food production in overseas markets.
- Participate in conferences and present papers that promote the qualities and strengths of Australia’s regional foods.
- Develop links between rural and regional secondary schools and food production businesses to enhance employment opportunities for exiting school leavers.

4.2 Action plan

The Hospitality ITAB, Tourism Training Victoria and Tourism Training Australia, has a significant role to play in the future of the commercial cookery industry. Government, state and federal, have commissioned the ITABS to gather representatives from key industry groups and associations which have an impact on the hospitality sector. They have the responsibility to ensure all interested parties are working towards common aims and achieving the common goals. The collaboration needs to expand as new players become part of the industry and new initiatives develop within the industry.

The ITABs have recently released the report “A Recipe for Change” which contains several strategies to address skills shortages in the commercial cookery and food trades industry. The report will hopefully become the catalyst for closing the gaps mentioned in 2.5 and the ISS Institute, through its fellow, will no doubt be able to contribute to the implementation of “A Recipe for Change”.

We have a great wealth of human resource potential in the industry at the moment and the action plan needs to look at ways of harnessing the energy and potential of employers, employees, owners, operators, teachers and government representatives. A fixed timeline is probably not appropriate in this context due to a number of factors not the least the shift in attitude that needs to be fostered for a fuller understanding and appreciation of the master chef to become a reality.

Events – advancing the industry and public perception

Conferences

There are several conferences per year that bring together people from the Hospitality and Tourism sector. These conferences are organised by industry groups – AHA, Tourism Training Australia, Tourism Training Victoria – and education providers – ATTHEA, Victorian Hospitality Educators Network and equivalents in other states. There are also international conferences, either here or overseas, with hospitality and culinary studies as their theme. I think it is possible to produce a paper for one of these conferences and present it either in the main body of conference or a workshop or plenary session. Conference participation would extend the content of this report and the study trip to a wide audience of figures involved in all aspects of culinary training. Likewise with the regional food production element of this report, there are conference events such as the Regional Food Workshop part of the annual Melbourne Food and Wine Festival.

Public perception

The public perception that cookery is a trade rather than a profession has been identified as a key problem for the commercial cookery sector and a contributing factor to the widening skills gaps in the industry due the poor employment retention rates. The prevailing attitude is one that does not value the cookery/food service component of the hospitality experience; that anyone can

enter a kitchen a cook a meal. But in reality the most successful chefs are those who have built up a great store of knowledge and experience over a significant period of time and can share this knowledge and skill with colleagues and customers.

The commercial cookery industry must attempt to influence those who have the ability to educate customers, school leavers, parents and other industry members of the skill involved in food production and the many high-level skills employees in this industry utilise on a daily basis. The government recognises the importance of this area, hence the report "A Recipe for Change", as hospitality is a key element of the tourism experience.

Education

Awareness about culinary career and professional development should form an integral element of the training programmes in secondary schools, TAFE colleges and institutions of higher learning. The ultimate goal would be to enhance the perception of the professional chef and to facilitate the presentation of positive career models for young people to consider.

A mentoring programme for younger chefs should be created to establish links with recognised professionals in the industry and broaden the experience of the younger professionals and expose them to variety of chefs and working styles.

Similarly with regional food producers or those intending to enter this growing industry sector mentoring programmes could be established to assist them to create networks and participate in cooperative ventures.

Knowledge transfer in both of the areas identified in 2.5 and 3.0 can be encouraged and promoted within the industry nationally and internationally through:

- Traineeships.
- Fellowships (such as ISS Institute).
- Scholarships.
- Industry exchange programmes.
- Exchange programmes for lectures, trade fairs, cookery workshops and events.

4.3 Opportunities for the commercial cookery sector and regional food production

Much of the experience and content of the study trip validated what we are currently doing in Australia. Furthermore, many of the things I saw would fit quite easily into the Australian context and help to develop further the industry sectors that are the subject of the problems discussed in 2.5 and 3.0. I think there has been sufficient research and development on the topics of this study trip and I believe that we can build on the current base of information and experience to create new initiatives that will help close the skills.

As mentioned earlier both of the industry sectors in the report have a significant role in local and national economies. The potential for both areas to contribute further to the economic development is unlimited. For example, there is the large prepared and raw food market in South East Asia. One of our challenges is to ensure that our export goods match the expectation of our overseas customers and that we develop and produce the right product for the right market. Exporting and replacing imports with a superior local product can only benefit our communities economically.

At the base of all this activity is an attitudinal shift towards value-adding as a key element in the food production industry. This links with commercial cookery because it is often chefs who are the first try new products or redevelop old ones for new uses. I see a real and lasting synergy between the chef and regional food producer – from paddock to plate as the saying goes.

We are a multicultural society and there are many regional food products made in Australia that have their origins elsewhere. What Australia has been able to contribute to the development of a sustainable regional food production industry is to be found in the clean and green environment we have which is the envy of many countries overseas. We also need to develop the knowledge, skills and expertise of regional food producers, marketers and promoters.

5.0 APPENDICES

Questions used during meetings with education institutions/host organisations

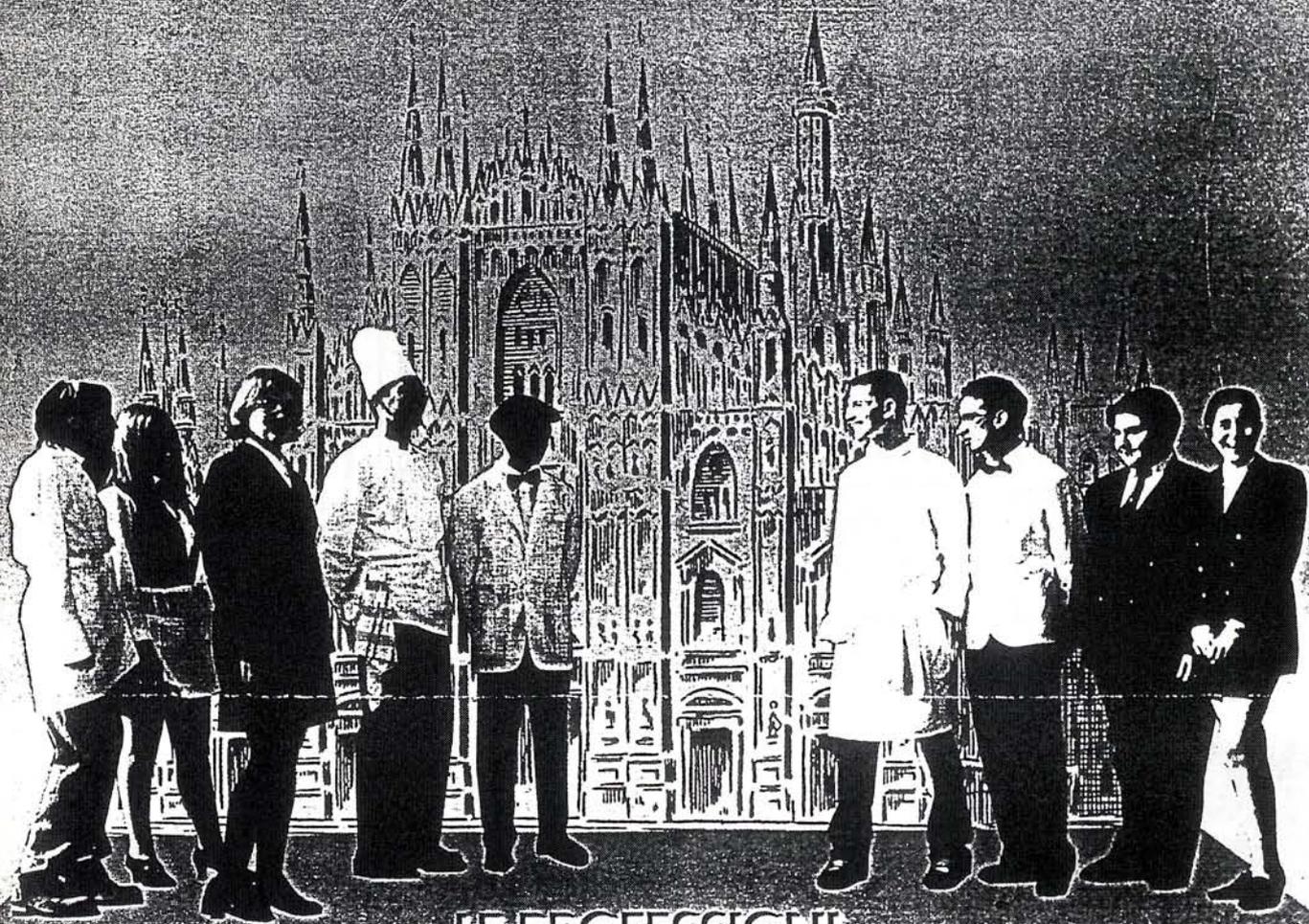
Brochures

Sample training pathway document

Standard Questions for visits to
Culinary Institutes in Italy

1. Who funds the programmes?
2. What level of involvement is there from industry groups?
3. Who writes the curriculum?
4. What are the minimum qualifications of teaching staff delivering a masters-style programme?
5. What specialised resources (materials & equipment) are required for the delivery of such programmes?
6. Who do you find to be your main client base? Where do participants come from?
7. What class sizes are feasible for the running of advanced programmes?
8. What cost is associated with the study of such programmes to participants?
9. Do you offer electives or streams within your advanced programmes?
10. Who are the lead agents involved in your training organisation?
11. What are employment opportunities and remuneration packages like for candidates completing advanced cookery training?
12. What assessment methods do you utilise in classes? Is there a workplace assessment model? Are there on-line delivery options for management units?
13. Are there pathways or progressive steps in your training system?
14. What methods of evaluation do you implement into your programmes for both teaching effectiveness and meeting learners needs?
15. Do you have any samples of your course outlines we could take back to Australia with us?

Istituto Professionale Servizi Alberghieri e della Ristorazione
"AMERIGO VESPUCCI"



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2 A TUTTI GLI INDIRIZZI

Scelta dell'indirizzo

3 MONOENNIO

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SCELTA

4 BIENNIO POST QUALIFICA
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DIPLOMA DI MATURITÀ
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- Religione/att.alternative

AREA D'INDIRIZZO

- Il Lingua Straniera
- Laboratorio di Cucina
- Laboratorio di sala e bar
- Principi di Alimentazione
- Lab. servizi di ricevimento

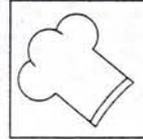
AREA DI APPROFONDIMENTO

Totale ore settimanali: 40

Ciò permette agli studenti di orientarsi con maggiore sicurezza nella scelta della specializzazione. Infatti:

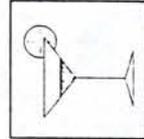
IL MONOENNIO (3° anno)

È l'anno nel quale lo studente frequenta uno solo dei 3 corsi:



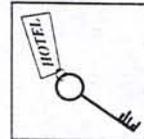
OPERATORE SERVIZI CUCINA:

- Area d'indirizzo:
- Il Lingua straniera
 - Alimenti e alimentazione
 - Elementi di gestione aziendale
 - Laboratorio servizi di ristorazione - settore cucina



OPERATORE SERVIZI SALA E BAR:

- Area d'indirizzo:
- Il Lingua straniera
 - Elementi di gestione aziendale
 - Alimenti e alimentazione
 - Laboratorio servizi di ristorazione - settore sala e bar



OPERATORE SERVIZI DI RICEVIMENTO

- Area d'indirizzo:
- Il Lingua straniera
 - Amministrazione alberghiera
 - Geografia delle risorse culturali etrusche
 - Laboratorio trattamento testi ed applicazioni gestionali
 - Laboratorio servizi di ricevimento

Inoltre per tutti sono previste in area comune:

- Italiano-Storia
- Lingua Straniera
- Matematica ed informatica
- Educazione Fisica
- Religione/att.alternative
- ed un' area di approfondimento.

Totale ore settimanali: 40

Prevede due indirizzi:

AREA COMUNE

- Italiano
- Storia
- Lingua straniera 3

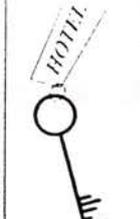
15 ore settimanali

SETTORE RISTORAZIONE



15 ore settimanali

SETTORE TURISTICO



15 ore settimanali

AREA DI PROFESSIONALIZZAZIONE
350 ore annue

DIPLOMA DI MATURITÀ

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Spiazzo Rendena (TN)
24 maggio 1999

VIA DEL BORGO

di ROBERTO ANDREONI
Concorezzo (MI)
7 giugno 1999

PER INFORMAZIONI E ISCRIZIONI

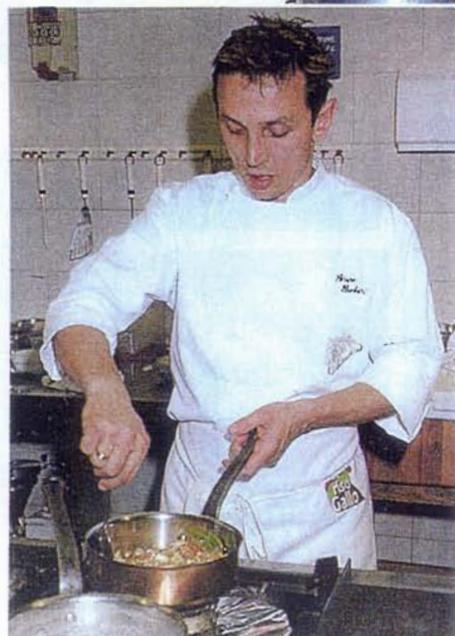
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Sono ancora una volta tre gli chef proposti nelle pagine seguenti. Tre protagonisti della ristorazione italiana più raffinata davanti ai quali anche la prestigiosa Guida Rossa della Michelin non è potuta rimanere indifferente: tutti, infatti, vedono il loro nome affiancato da una stella, segno di qualità e professionalità. Eccoli in ordine di apparizione su "il Codice della Cucina Italiana": Bruno Barbieri della "Locanda Solarola" a Castel Guelfo di Bologna; Walter Eynard del "Flipot" di Torre Pellice, in provincia di Torino; infine, Paolo Vai del "Grill Royal e Golf" a Courmayeur, ben nota località sciistica. Le loro lezioni nella cucina dell'IPCA di Milano, e soprattutto le ricette proposte, sono, così, a disposizione di tutti.

*Servizio fotografico
di Angelo Bellavia*





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APICIUS PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS





APICIUS PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS



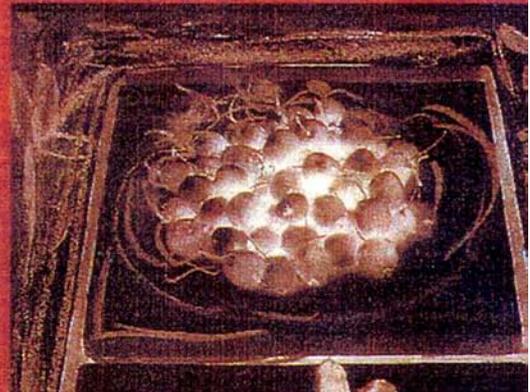
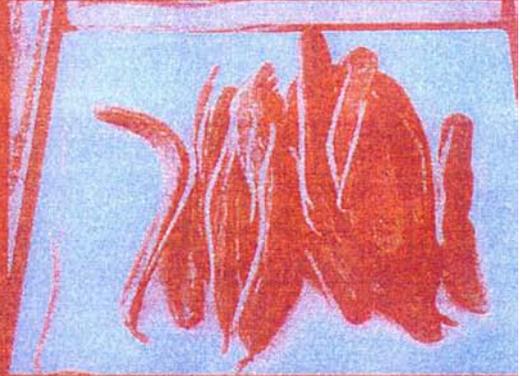
APICIUS PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

Our academic goal is to introduce students who wish to start a professional career in the field of Culinary Arts/Wine Appreciation/ Hospitality, to the legacy of Italian Culture, which has always been strictly tied to Food/ Wine/ Hospitality. Students can attend one single semester or accomplish the full year program, receiving a certificate in their chosen field. Beginning level semesters are offered in both Fall and Spring. Advanced programs are offered once a year, Spring Semester only. Students wishing to enroll directly into the Advanced Semester should send a detailed CV along with their enrollment form. The school reserves the right to accept students into the advanced program only upon their arrival in Florence and after they have successfully completed their practical/ theory entrance exam. The certificate programs (1 year long) provide students with the basic skills necessary for the individual desiring entry into the food/ wine/ hospitality industry. The curriculum focuses on 3 general areas of study:

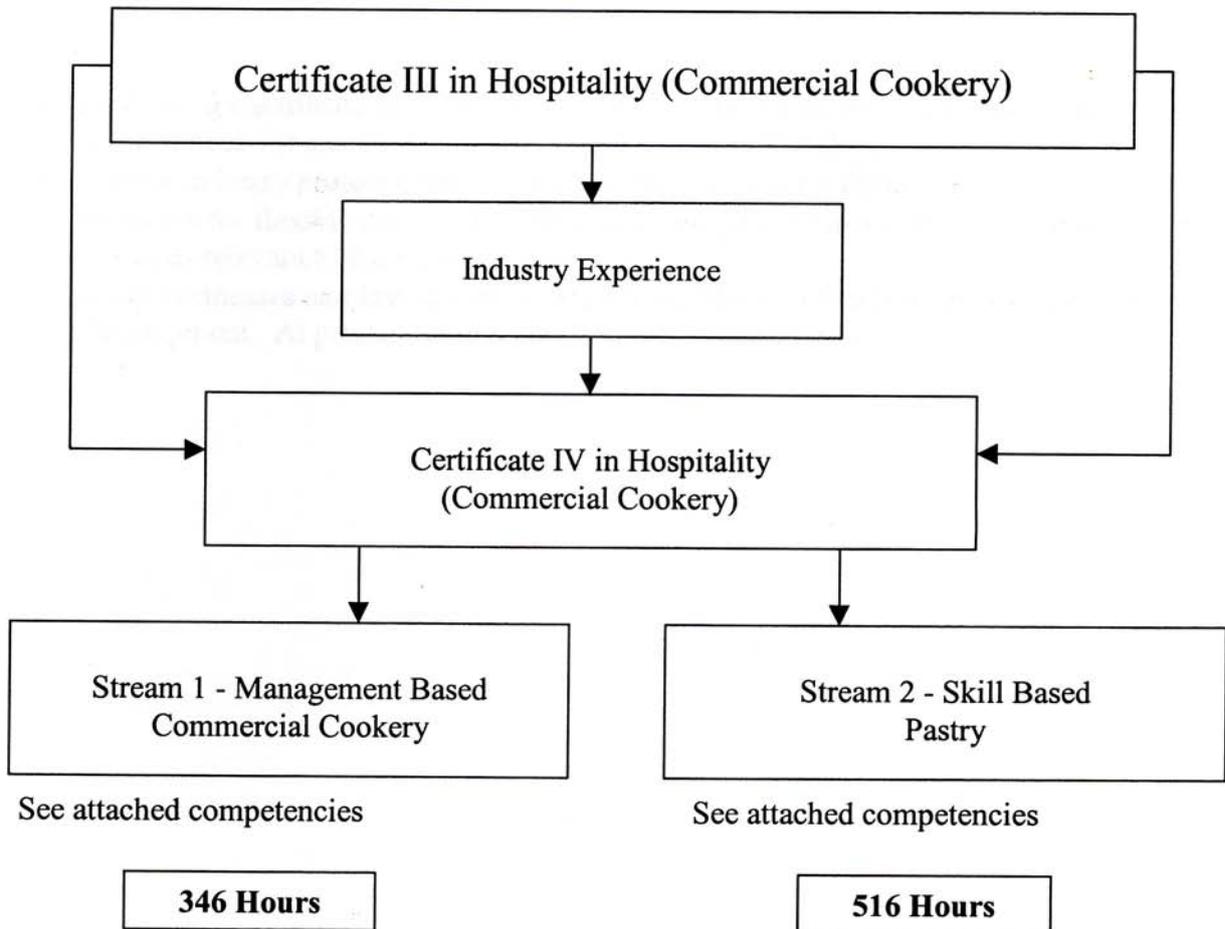
- 1 Hospitality Management
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- 3 Culinary Arts

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Each program includes an internship of approximately 10 hours a week in local restaurants, wineries, or hotels, where students can practice and experience the real working environment in one of the most visited cities in the world. In order to keep class sizes small the number of enrollments is limited. Admissions will close once available spaces are filled.



Proposal for training at a “Master” level



Considerations

- ◆ Access to specialist staff (Masters), High profile would be ideal.
- ◆ Fee for service - More marketable - professionals could undertake units as individual training programme as relevant to career path. Higher remuneration for potential participants in industry would allow for this fee category.
- ◆ Delivery one day per week to cater to industry needs.
- ◆ Nominal hours moved from units and put against industry exchange.

Industry Exchange

- ◆ To be set up with industry partners. (Must be able to expose participants to required skill level (4-5 star). Perhaps could use contacts through industry Masters delivering material in TAFE environment.

Market

- ◆ Continuing Certificate III Cookery apprentices (This client group has indicated the will and need for a continuation of training and specialist skills)
- ◆ Current industry professionals wishing to upgrade existing skills.
- ◆ Pathways for flexible delivery practices, allowing participants to create training packages relevant to their chosen career path.
- ◆ Many businesses employing cookery staff have allocated funding against Professional Development. At present limited options for skill development.

1.

Commercial Catering		Nominal Hours		Industry Exchange	
			TAFE		
THHBCAT01A	Prepare Foods According to Specific Dietary & Cultural Needs	36	36	BCAT1*	
THHBCAT02A	Package Prepared Foodstuffs	6	6	BCAT2*	
THHBCAT03A	Transport and Store Food in a Safe & Hygienic Manner	12	6	BCAT3*	6
THHBCAT04A	Operate a Fast Food Outlet	36	10		26
THHBCAT05A	Apply Cook-Chill Production Processes	36	6	BCAT6*	30
THHBCAT06A	Apply Catering Control Principles	10	10	BCAT4	
THHADCAT01A	Prepare Daily Meal Plans to Promote Good Health	18	18	ADCAT1*	
THHADCAT02A	Develop Menus to Meet Special Cultural and Dietary Needs	12	12	ADCAT2*	
THHADCAT03A	Select Catering Systems	30	15	ADCAT4*	15
THHSCAT01A	Manage Facilities Associated with Commercial Catering Contracts	30	15		15
THHSCAT02A	Plan the total Concept for a Major Event or Function	30	16		20
THHSCAT03A	Prepare Tenders for Catering Contracts	30	20		10
THHSCAT04A	Design Menus to Meet Market Needs	30	20		10
THHSCAT05A	Select Cook-Chill Production Systems	24	10		14
TOTAL HOURS		200			146

TOTAL 346

2.

Patisserie		Nominal Hours	TAFE	Industry Exchange
THHBPT01A	Prepare and Produce Pastries	24	14	ADPT2 10
THHBPT02A	Prepare and Produce Cakes	24	14	ADPT12 10
THHBPT03A	Prepare and Produce Yeast Goods	42	20	ADPT3 22
THHADPT01A	Prepare Bakery Products for Patisseries	42	20	ADPT11 22
THHADPT02A	Prepare and Present Cateaux, Torten and Cakes	60	30	ADPT12 30
THHADPT03A	Present Desserts	42	20	ADPT15, ADPT17 22
THHADPT04A	Prepare and Display Petits Fours	30	20	10
THHADPT05A	Prepare and Model Marzipan	24	24	ADPT5
THHADPT06A	Prepare Desserts to Meet Special Dietary Requirements	30	20	10
THHADPT07A	Prepare and Display Sugar Work	48	20	ADPT7, ADPT8, ADPT9 28
THHADPT08A	Plan, Prepare and Display Sweet Buffet Show Pieces	30	20	ADPT5, ADPT8, ADPT9, ADPT11 10
THHSPT01A	Plan and Operate coffee Shops	120	70	50
TOTAL HOURS		292		224

TOTAL 516
