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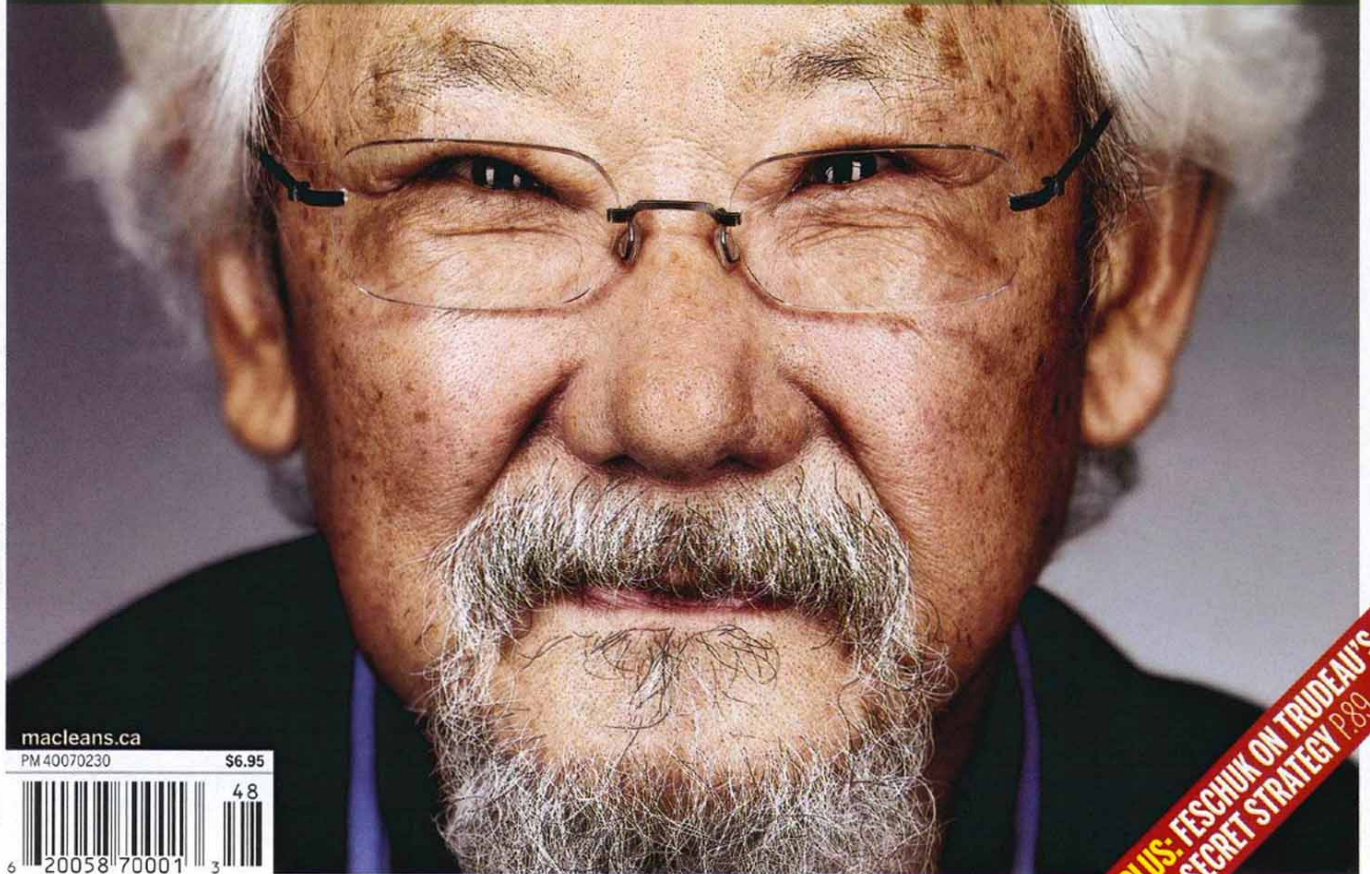
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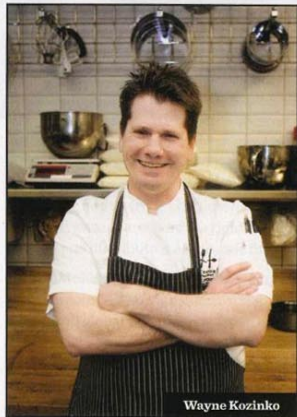
Chef Instructor demonstrating technique

Wayne Kozinko

Current position: Head Pastry Chef, Hawksworth Restaurant, Vancouver

College program: Culinary Arts, North Island College

The world of haute cuisine has always beckoned to Wayne Kozinko, who grew up cooking alongside his mother. Fortunately the Vancouver resident didn't have to look far to train for his dream: North Island College (NIC) had a culinary arts program with all the ingredients he wanted: courses on bread baking, desserts and meat



Wayne Kozinko

“A personality that gives them a certain amount of professional drive to push themselves and excel in their chosen career – perhaps the one thing you can't learn.”

cookery, along with instruction on how to run a kitchen. The program also required students to intern at local restaurants.

After graduating from NIC, Kozinko relocated to Vancouver Community College, where he completed an apprenticeship. He got his first full-blown job at the boutique Metropolitan Hotel in downtown Vancouver.

When Kozinko heard about an opening for a pastry chef at Vancouver's Four Seasons Hotel – voted one of Canada's top-25 hotels in 2013 – he applied for the position. The “interview” actually consisted of three interviews, and part of the process was to create eight items for a tasting by the food

and beverage management team. Having gone through similar tests at NIC, Kozinko was prepared – and nailed the job.

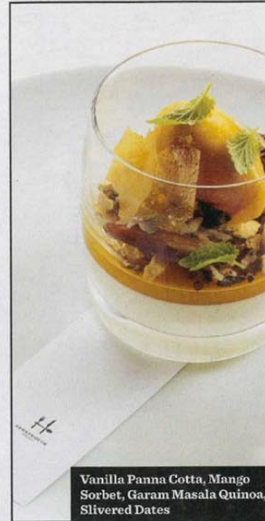
A two-and-a-half-year stint at Four Seasons gave Kozinko the know-how to leapfrog to Hawksworth, where he currently works. The uber-upscale eatery counts the 2013 Vancouver Magazine Restaurant of the Year award and Maclean's own 2012 Restaurant of the Year award among its numerous honours.

As head pastry chef, Kozinko guides a team that creates seasonal desserts. Always mindful of the variety of customer tastes, he mixes it up with both “safe” items, such as a dark chocolate praline bar served with a burnt orange compote, orange sorbet and local hazelnuts, and more adventurous offerings. One of his recent custard creations, for example, calls for Buddha's hand, a delicately flavoured citrus-like fruit native to China and India.

From complex confections to product pricing, the fast pace of Hawksworth's kitchen doesn't throw Kozinko off his game. “My internships at NIC prepared me for the stress of a real kitchen,” he says.

A few years ago, NIC's culinary arts program introduced a new model that weaves industry hours and Red Seal training into the curriculum, says Christine Lilyholm, chef instructor with

Photo courtesy of North Island College



Vanilla Panna Cotta, Mango Sorbet, Garam Masala Quinoa, Slivered Dates

the culinary arts program. “Students enter as first-year apprentices,” she says. The final level of the program also touches on culinary management and leadership. Students don't have far to travel to hone their skills: The Campbell River, B.C. campus operates a bistro-style restaurant that offers gourmet fare to those “lucky enough to get a reservation,” says Lilyholm. A brand-new facility in Port Alberni, B.C. complements the Campbell River location.

Some college culinary programs are devoted to a specific cuisine or style of cooking. George Brown College's Culinary Arts-Italian postgraduate program, for example, has students learning basic Italian and travelling to Italy to experience Italian cuisine in its native habitat. Vancouver Community College's Asian Culinary Arts program, meanwhile, covers Chinese, Japanese, Malaysian, Thai and Korean cuisines, among others. Then there's Fanshawe College's artisanal culinary arts program, which teaches students to cook within a sustainable agriculture model.

Photo courtesy of Hawksworth Restaurant

Gone are the days when talent and a pinch of luck could ignite a career, says Kozinko. “Employers look for formal training in an accredited program,” he says. “I certainly do look for some basic formal training when I hire people.” The other thing he looks for?

“A personality that gives them a certain amount of professional drive to push themselves and excel in their chosen career – perhaps the one thing you can't learn.”

-Written by Gabrielle Bauer

-Edited by John Southerst