

# Professional Spotlight

## Alain Pignard, Executive Chef *A Man With Endless Inspiration*

Originally from Lyon, France, Chef Alain Pignard, Maître Rôtisseur, has plied his trade in some of the finest kitchens around the world: Hotel des Ambassadeurs in Paris; the famous Hotel Dorchester in London, where he worked under the celebrated Chef Anton Mossiman; and the Cavalieri Hilton in Rome, where he was Chef Saucier of the internationally acclaimed restaurant, La Pergola.

Appointed Executive Chef of Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth in January 1999, Alain has been a part of the Fairmont team for twelve years, successively assuming the responsibilities of Chef Saucier for the Beaver Club, Chef for Le Montréalais, Sous-Chef of the main kitchens, as well as working closely with John Cordeaux as his Executive Sous-Chef.

Approximately ninety employees are regularly at work in the kitchens of the 1,039-room hotel, with its three restaurants (Le Montréalais, Les Voyageurs and the legendary Beaver Club), its thirty-three function rooms and its kosher kitchen. Through its successful outside catering division, Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth handles highly visible social events, under Chef Pignard's supervision. Over 100,000 meals are served outside the hotel annually for groups such as the Canadian Centre for Architecture, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Cancer Society's Daffodil Ball, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and VIP racing fans at the Formula One Grand Prix of Canada — not a small challenge!

Through his classical training, worldly travels and experience working under the tutelage of the masters, Chef Pignard has amassed a vast and varied background, which today allows him to showcase his talent and offer his guests the creations of his inexhaustible imagination and passion. Well-known for showcasing the



Executive Chef Alain Pignard.

bounty of Québec, he has established close relationships with local producers who work hand-in-hand with him to develop new vegetables and reserve crops exclusively for his gala events. As part of the property's ongoing commitment to supporting local cuisine and artisan producers, the hotel recently adopted two goats from the Fromagerie du Vieux St-François outside Montreal to make the hotel's signature cheeses for its gourmet restaurant the Beaver Club. Chef Pignard explains, "I feel the Chef of Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth has a great responsibility to promote the high-quality products of Quebec, and particularly those produced by the small specialized farmers."

With his solid professional



Chef Pignard in action at the Formula One Grand Prix of Canada.

background, his out-of-the-ordinary culinary talent and his readiness to meet every challenge with enthusiasm, Alain has rapidly joined the ranks of the grand chefs who have preceded him at the helm of the kitchens of Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth and has assumed a leadership role on the Montreal gastronomy scene. The new century started very well for Alain when he was given the opportunity to cook for Chef Paul Bocuse, unanimously recognized as the chef of the century, at an event for the launch of the Montreal High Lights Festival. “Paul Bocuse inspired today’s cuisine,” Chef Pignard says. “It was an honor to cook for the most respected and best-known chef in the world, and few chefs are given such an opportunity in their careers.” In 2003, 2004 and 2005, Chef Pignard was named Chef of the Year for Montréal by the Société des Chefs, Cuisiniers et Pâtisseries du Québec. In 2005, he was awarded the national title of Top Québec Chef by the Société.

Pignard was also chosen by La Maison de la France to create a gourmet dinner for the “Bourses France 2000” event with world-renowned Chef Alain Ducasse. In subsequent festivals, Chef Pignard was honored to have the

opportunity to work with well-known Chef Georges Blanc for the gala dinner (2004) and with celebrity Canadian Chef Susur Lee from Toronto in 2005. In 2006, he welcomed Chef Emile Jung from Alsace for the festival and in 2007, he was pleased to host Hetta van Deventer from South Africa and Shea Gallante from New York. In 2008, he hosted Thierry Marx, two-star Michelin chef and in 2009, for the tenth anniversary of the festival, honoring France, he hosted Alain Passard (L’Arpège), Philippe Etchebest (Hostellerie de Plaisance), Gérald Garcia (Hostellerie de la Pomarède), Gaël Orioux (Auguste), Michel Portos (Saint James) and Stéphane Raimbault (L’Oasis). In 2010, he welcomed Joachim from Lisbon’s only Michelin-starred restaurant, Eleven. This year, he is looking forward to welcoming Jean-Michel Lorrain, 3-star Michelin chef, and owner of the famous restaurant La Côte Saint Jacques in France.

Those rare moments spent outside the kitchens of the hotel are reserved to visit other chefs and, during his vacation, he is irresistibly drawn to the grand tables of the countries he visits, bringing home with him the flavours and aromas that are of such great inspiration to him.



“Captured in the act”— Chef Pignard cooking at an event.



On-site at the Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth.



Jean-Yvon Le Dour and Chef Pignard at the announcement of the Beaver Club as Restaurant of the Year by Guide Debeur Fall 2010.



Catering the Ball of Musée d’art contemporain.