

# Wishing Our Young Competitors Good Luck in Europe!

## Michael Dekker - International Jeunes Commis Rôtisseurs Competition 2008



Michael Dekker

Imagine entering a room and being presented with a mystery basket containing seasonal ingredients. You are then asked to compose and execute a three-course menu (first course, main course, and dessert) for four people

using all of these ingredients, as well as drawing on a variety of staples from a pantry. Your written menu must be completed within the first half-hour, and then three and a half hours are allowed for preparation, after which the finished dishes are presented to be judged in fifteen-minute intervals. It is an extremely challenging competition.

On 19 September 2008, in conjunction with the Grand Chapitre of the Bailliage of France, our own Michael Dekker will be at le Cordon Bleu in Paris to meet that challenge at the 32nd Concours International des Jeunes Commis Rôtisseurs. Michael was born in St. Catharines, Ontario, and grew up in the neighbouring community of Smithville, moving to Calgary at the age of fourteen. His

first experience in the hospitality industry was as a dishwasher at Earl's Restaurant (at the tender age of fourteen), later spending eighteen months at La Dolce Vita. After graduating from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) in 2000, Michael apprenticed under Georg Windisch and Simon Dunn at their catering company. He then joined Executive Chef Vincent Parkinson at the Calgary Golf & Country Club, one of Canada's most exclusive private clubs, as Saucier. It was during this time that he was a member of the Calgary Chef Association gold-medal winning team. Michael won the Canadian Jeunes Commis Rôtisseurs competition in 2007 and is now Sous-Chef.

## Lianne Castravelli – Jeunes Sommeliers Competition



Lianne at Montreal's Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth's Beaver Club.

The 2008 International Jeunes Sommeliers Competition will take place during the Austrian Grand Chapitre in Vienna from October 23 to 26. Canada will again be ably represented by Lianne Castravelli, Sommelière at Montreal's Fairmont Le Reine Elizabeth Beaver Club, and last year's silver medallist in the inaugural event in Frankfurt, Germany.

Coming from a long line of Italian winemakers, Lianne's interest in wine originally stemmed from her grandfather's war stories as an Italian POW during World War II. As a prisoner at the hands of American troops, Castravelli was chosen as the American soldiers' wine taster.

After studying at the Wine & Spirits Education Trust (WSET) in London, England, Lianne expanded her experience with a tenure at the Oxo Tower Restaurant Bar & Brasserie on the South Bank of the Thames River, and Zuma restaurant, a contemporary Japanese restaurant in Knightsbridge, London. While at Zuma, she was fortunate to train in sake varieties, an aspect of the trade most sommeliers are not privy to experiencing. Lianne then returned to her hometown of Montreal to share her knowledge about wine pairings and appreciation as sommelière at the Beaver Club.

Lianne's favourite wines consist of

anything with character and a story, both inside and outside the glass. Her favourite varietals include Pinot Noir and Syrah, from the regions of Oregon, USA; Burgundy, France; and New Zealand. Her philosophy on wine continues to evolve, but for the moment she believes that drinking wine should be a full experience, simultaneously private and shared, serious and playful.

The competition itself is open to professionals having a pronounced interest and knowledge of wine and crafted beverages. The candidates do not have to be certified sommeliers but must be involved in the sommelier function at a Chaîne establishment even if they are not officially designated as Sommelier. They must be sponsored by a member of the Chaîne and be at least 21 years old and not more than 32 years old as of September 1, 2008. The competition consists of three parts: a written test, a blind tasting and a practical skills test.