

The Great Mushroom Hunt

(Submitted by Marilyn McNamara, Victoria Chargée de Presse)

We adventured into the wild British Columbia terrain to hunt for mushrooms under the care and tutelage of Brother Michael, fording streams, climbing over logs on a wet and rainy winter day in Victoria. Nonetheless, the team was not daunted and the mushrooms attest to our spirit and success — chanterelle, lobster (*hypomyces lactifluorum*) and cauliflower (*sparassis crispa*) mushrooms.

Afterwards, lunch by the fireside at the Westin Bear Mountain, where thoughts of rainy weather dissipated with well-earned mushroom martinis. The presentation, service and meal were excellent and a perfect end to the afternoon.

We started with chanterelle soup served with squares of apricot jelly, poached quail eggs and caramelized onion powder on the side of the bowl. This was followed by cherry-glazed squab, Quebec fois gras, and a fricassée of local vegetables with vanilla yam puree. We were then treated to a duo of pork: Babes honey-glazed pork belly and pork tenderloin, carrot ribbon, Anna in the Woods, braised cipollini onions, and port jus. Dessert was the speciality of the house: Panache chocolate bar with salted caramel ice cream, blackberry cloud and chocolate 'soil' served with specialty coffees.

During lunch, Jim Jaworski, Bailli Régional of Manitoba, generously presented Brother Michael with an authentic mushroom knife from France, and was making plans for further mushroom adventures.



Heading back with baskets of wild mushrooms. (Left to right) David Flaherty; Marion Miners; Samir Hanna; Brother Michael; Jacki Painsi; Elizabeth Brown; Jim Jaworski; and Robert Rothwell.



Mushroom martinis.



Chanterelle soup.



Cherry-glazed squab.



Chanterelles! (Left to right) Jacki Painsi, Robert Rothwell, and Diana Maier.



Panache chocolate bar.