

News release, 15 May 2009

POLYTECH STUDENTS DOING IT PROFESSIONALLY

Forget Gordon Ramsay's rantings and ravings; the goings-on behind the doors of Tutoro Restaurant are a world away from the tears and tantrums on *Hell's Kitchen*, says chef tutor Alex Hayward.

"Kitchens are strict places because they're very structured, but I learnt a long time ago that you need to treat your team well. No matter how good your food is Yelling and screaming doesn't help," says Hayward, who worked with a number of chefs during a long stint working overseas.

"New Zealand's a bit different. We've got lots of great chefs who are hard task masters but they're not ranters and ravers; they're good team managers and they produce excellent product."

In his role as Programme Coordinator of Tai Poutini Polytechnic's Certificate in Professional Culinary Arts, Hayward and fellow tutor Jos Wellman have taken their students out of the classroom and into the kitchen of Tai Poutini's on-campus training restaurant where they're showcasing their talents to cuisine-savvy Coasters.

Currently, breakfast is being served at Tutoro Restaurant every Wednesday morning until the 10th June (7-8.30am). From 17th June until the 29th July, diners can enjoy lunch at Tutoro on Wednesdays from 12-1.30pm; and from 5th August until 2nd September, dinner is on the menu every Wednesday from 6-8pm.

"Breakfast is the easiest service so we start off with that. It gets the students into things slowly and introduces them to how a kitchen is set up and operates. Lunch is busier because customers want to be in and out in a shorter time, and then it's on to dinner a bit later in the year."

Hayward says students get to work in different sections of the kitchen each time so they get a variety of experiences. During the breakfast service, they even get a chance to work 'front of house', but for the lunch and dinner services, Tai Poutini's Hospitality students fill that role.

Tai Poutini has operated a training restaurant on campus since 1993, and the services are always well-supported by locals. "A lot of local businesses hold breakfast or lunch meetings in the restaurant." The restaurant operates on a break-even basis so customers get good food at a great price, says Hayward, while supporting students in their training.

But Hayward says they're mindful of competing with other restaurants in Greymouth. "We've got to be respectful of others trying to make a crust, which is why we only open one day a week for a limited time."

The hands-on experience gained at Tutoro stands students in good stead later in the year when they head off for their two-week industry placement. "It's great for students to train in a realistic environment," says Hayward.

Last year's graduates are working all over the country, including the Bay of Islands, Blanket Bay Lodge in Queenstown, the Glaciers and Huka Lodge. While most leave the Coast, Hayward says "a good gaggle" stay put. Many eventually use their qualifications to work overseas. "It's so fantastic to see them settle into good places and achieving well. A local west coast boy has just been made executive chef at the Shy Restaurant in Jakarta. That's quite an achievement."

The programme runs from February to November, and is open to a maximum of 20 students. As well as studying for their Certificate in Professional Culinary Arts, students sit their London City and Guilds exam as well, an international qualification which is recognised all around the world "and is a helping hand when students put in applications for overseas positions or start the big O.E".

ENDS

For further information please contact:

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Alex Hayward | Tel 03 7699439 |
| Programme Coordinator | 021 0611847 |
| Certificate in Professional Culinary Art | email alexh@tpp.ac.nz |
| Tai Poutini Polytechnic | |

About Tai Poutini Polytechnic:

Tai Poutini Polytechnic (TPP) offers a range of exciting programmes including outdoor education, ski patrol, ecotourism, jade and hard stone carving, professional chef and civil construction. Tai Poutini Polytechnic has campuses in Auckland, Matamata, Christchurch, Wanaka, Invercargill, Westport, Greymouth, Reefton and Hokitika. In 2009 TPP is offering programmes at Greymouth, Reefton, Westport and Hokitika campuses with no tuition fees (conditions apply).