

Too many writers in the kitchen

Journalists get schooled in the ways of the crepe

Saturday, December 15, 2007

On a sunny Monday afternoon at King West's Calphalon Culinary Institute, a group of telegenic student chefs are guiding a bunch of culinarily challenged journalists through the subtleties of frying up a crepe.

It's a promotional gimmick for Chef School, the Food Network's latest offering, which airs Tuesday nights at 10 starting Jan. 1.

The five young chefs on hand are attendees of Chef School, also known as the Stratford Chefs School. The series follows them, and seven other students, through two intense years of culinary training at the school (the second season -- the second year of the program -- is being filmed this winter).

The atmosphere this afternoon isn't quite as tense as it gets at Stratford's classroom kitchens, but the spirit of competition is thick in the air, for these journalist-made crepes are to be rigorously judged by Eleanor Kane and James Morris, the founders of the Chefs School.

Though the stakes for the students of Chef School are nowhere near as high as they are during examination time, the journos are getting an idea of what it feels like to cook under the pressure of the clock and the discerning eyes and mouths of the judges.

Toronto Sun food editor Rita DeMontis took top honours for her savoury crepe, which was pronounced "light and silky" by Kane and Morris. She scored a snazzy crepe pan for her trouble.

An honourable mention for aesthetics went to media personality Enza the Supermodel for a sweet Nutella-and-strawberry crepe arranged prettily on a plate surrounded by strawberries.

This reporter makes a mean crepe, but was ultimately shot down for using too much whipped cream. "It's too busy," declared Kane. "Less is more." We must respectfully disagree with that dictate. When the substance in question is whipped cream, more is obviously more.