

Young chefs set the course

Spending 10 days getting acquainted with the future of culinary excellence in this country

By Elizabeth Baird

I've just finished enjoying a delicious 10 days full of fine dining that included supping courtesy of some fabulous eateries, as well as enjoying the foods of our future -- future chefs, that is.

My week has included watching student chefs in action, judging their work, and enjoying the fruits of their labour.

It started with second-year students at the Stratford Chefs School, working with visiting chef Yvan Lebrun of the Restaurant Initiale, an acclaimed Relais et Chateau establishment in Quebec City.

A master of textures and artistic presentation, Lebrun (along with his gracious wife and partner, Rolande Leclair) teamed with students to cook dinner for the school's Supper Club -- a neat way to invite local residents to get to know and enjoy the school all the while supporting its chef training program by covering the cost of preparation.

Lebrun, always a proponent of local and fresh, brought a Quebec ingredient I had not tasted -- buckthorn berries, super-high in vitamins and very tart, and they were used to accent the taste and look of his fine chocolate dessert. Check restaurantinitiale.com for more information.