

RECRUITMENT RELEASE

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Advanced Professional Cook Training Arrives at NIC

Beginning February 2012, North Island College will offer its first Professional Cook 3 program allowing students with a passion for cooking the opportunity to complete all three levels of their apprenticeship training on the North Island.



North Island College instructor Christine Lilyholm and former student Cameron Kuehl make chocolate desserts in the Professional Cook program. In February, alumni such as Kuehl will be able to return to NIC for Professional Cook 3 training.

The program means students such as Comox Valley cook Doug Huffman no longer have to leave jobs and move south to Nanaimo or Victoria, to prepare for the Interprovincial (Red Seal) exam.

“It’s close to home, cost-effective, and well taught by Chef Lilyholm and Chef Hansen,” said Huffman, who recently returned to North Island College for the Professional Cook 1 and 2 programs.

NIC’s smaller class sizes, carefully planned courses, and personal instruction allowed him to know his instructors and season his love of cooking with new knowledge and techniques. He looks forward to working with them again as he advances his career training this winter.

“Professional Cook 3 opens up a lot of doors, plus it gives you the potential to earn more money,” Huffman said.

“This is the first time the entire apprenticeship training has been offered at North Island College,” said chef-instructor Christine Lilyholm. “It’s something we’ve been working toward for a very long time. Students learn high-end finishing chocolate work, advanced meat techniques, such as pâtés, terrines, and charcuterie, and intensive theory in only six weeks.”

The program is designed to create culinary leaders who can confidently manage restaurant costs and human resource needs as well as design menus and prepare intricate meals. Graduates are prepared to write the Red Seal exam, giving them recognized credentials to work across Canada.

Students are eligible to enroll in Professional Cook 3 after completing Professional Cook 1 and 2 and working the required industry apprenticeship hours. Cooks without formal training may also be able to participate in the new training system, which may include an Industry Training Authority challenge process. (Visit www.itabc.ca/Page1024.aspx for details.)

Already, industry chefs are welcoming the Professional Cook program’s arrival to the North Island.

Chef Ronald St. Pierre, of Courtenay’s highly regarded Locals restaurant, has hired about a dozen NIC apprentices since opening in 2008.

As the chairman of the North Island Chef’s Association, St. Pierre says the new program is good for North Island culinary students, restaurants, and foodies as it builds demand for highly trained, homegrown chefs.

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"As chefs we do believe that it is important to get the proper training as professional cook," said St. Pierre. "It gives you experiences and insight you might not get on the job, prepares you for the future, and gives you a solid base to continue with the Canadian Culinary Federation to become a certified chef de cuisine."

NIC's Professional Cook programs start in Port Alberni (Cook 1) and Campbell River (Cook 1 and 2) this September. Professional Cook 3 begins February 2012. To get started, continue your training, or check funding options, visit www.nic.bc.ca/apprenticeship today.

For more information on the program, or to register, please call 1-800-715-0914 and ask to speak with a student advisor.

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