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# THE BOUQUET GARNI

NEWSLETTER OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA CULINARY ARTS SPECIALIST ASSOCIATION



## President's Message

What a strange few months it has been. I usually have the pleasure of writing a message for the Spring Bouquet Garni that is full of anticipation of upcoming events and of course the summer break. This year is very different. While I do not get to share thoughts of competitions or share professional development experiences, I do have the honour of sharing thanks.



Thank you to every member for all of the work and effort you have put in since March to adapt such a hands-on course such as culinary arts to work in an on-line environment. It has been a true pleasure learning what so many of you have done to keep students engaged, connected and positive through all of this. Each and every culinary arts class is so very different thus, the creative, online solutions have been equally as unique. A big thank you to all of the BCCASA members who have come together to help one another by sharing lessons and templates on the Google Doc. Also thank you for the great conversations and check ins on the BCCASA Chatroom. Every contribution has helped and it is this collaboration that continues to inspire me and remind me how important it is for us to have a strong PSA.

One thing that you will no doubt notice missing from this edition of the Bouquet Garni is the October BCCASA Conference and AGM information. While we have all been navigating our own classrooms, your Executive has had several virtual meetings regarding our October BCCASA Conference and AGM. Like everything else in these uncharted times, guidelines and direction from the BCTF regarding October conferences and PSA Day seem to evolve from week to week. The clear direction that we have received is that in no way is any PSA permitted to host any form of face to face conference and/or AGM. This leaves us limited to doing something virtual. But how do we do a virtual conference and AGM when we are such a hands-on group? Initially, we decided that it may be best to push the pause button on the October conference and choose another date when social distancing permits. However, there have been some new developments and supports put into place by the BCTF which may be beneficial to you as BCCASA members. So, like most things right now, the fate and direction of the 2020 BCCASA October conference and AGM is still to be determined. I expect to have a plan in place before the end of June and I will make sure to send you all information as it comes, but for right now, I just ask for your patience and understanding.

One last experience from the COVID 19 shut down that I wanted to share is the value of slowing down. Like most of you, especially this time of the year, I am (happily) working a lot. Meetings, banquets, graduations, track meets, district recognition dinners, the list goes on and on. I can honestly not remember when I have

spent so much time at home. While I do miss the daily challenge of the kitchen and the excitement of the students, for me, this forced down time has been a chance for me to spend time with my family, eat dinners together, go for evening walks and catch up on those little projects around the house. I truly hope that you are also doing your best to make the most out of this unfamiliar slow down and getting the much-deserved quality time in while you can.

All the best and stay safe,

Trevor

**A Note from the Editor:**

Hi there folks, it's me your friendly neighbourhood editor and colleague, Stephen Schram. I just thought I'd drop you a note about this and future issues of the *Bouquet Garni*

First off, WE NEED YOUR HELP! I think the B.G. will continue to thrive and work best if it truly represents all of us, give a good reflection of the entire province of British Columbia and what going on with this unique teaching gig we all do. Please feel free to send me anything to let us know what happening in your region. Don't like to write? Just give me a Coles notes, point form, hack & slash account and I'll will type it up and send it to you for approval. You may notice that there are reoccurring columns, like "What Going On" and "Notes from the Back of House". If you've read something interesting that you think might be of interest to all then send it my way! The B.G. will only be a good and as interesting as you help make it.

Last, I've created a new area in Google Photos, for our conference photos. I have pictures from 2014-2019 uploaded and ready to go. Simply click on the link to take a gander at the years past event. Again, if you have pictures to share, send them my way, I'll get them uploaded. Hopefully the memories will hold you until 2021, when we can all hopefully get together again. In the meantime, take care of yourselves, stay safe, and don't watch too much television.

Stephen Schram  
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BCCASA CONFERENCE 2014 ~ UBC Farm - <https://photos.app.goo.gl/id7CmfhVcCDDXXHAh7>

BCCASA CONFERENCE 2015 ~ Powell River - <https://photos.app.goo.gl/6U8RuDLXeSN62t2U8>

BCCASA CONFERENCE 2016 ~ Kamloops - <https://photos.app.goo.gl/5oSKC7Ldp8qM2Qx67>

BCCASA CONFERENCE 2017 ~ Vancouver - <https://photos.app.goo.gl/SWD1FdEJvp5AFaBZA>

BCCASA CONFERENCE 2018 ~ Kelowna - <https://photos.app.goo.gl/QsQ47GtBagJqCKjZ7>

BCCASA CONFERENCE 2019 ~ Greater Victoria - <https://photos.app.goo.gl/uEbTFFEyE6fbK5zr5>

## Infographics of the Month

Cut these out and stick 'em in your  
classroom!

(whenever you're in there next)

**"THIS IS MY ADVICE TO PEOPLE:  
LEARN HOW TO COOK, TRY NEW RECIPES,  
LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES,  
BE FEARLESS, AND ABOVE ALL  
HAVE FUN"**

JULIA CHILD



**THINK  
LIKE A  
CHEF.**

**"...and in that unforgettably  
sweet moment in my personal  
history, that the one moment  
still alive for me than so many  
on the other 'firsts' that  
followed, I attained glory"**

**Anthony Bourdain, the first time  
he ate an oyster.**

**"COOKING IS AN  
OBSERVATION-BASED  
PROCESS THAT YOU CAN'T DO  
IF YOU'RE SO COMPLETELY  
FOCUSED ON A RECIPE."**

ALTON BROWN

**THINK  
LIKE A  
CHEF.**

# WHAT'S GOING ON

...around British Columbia

## VICTORY GARDENS

By Jessica Mann

Victory gardens, also called war gardens or food gardens for defense were grown during World Wars I and II. They were planted in private yards, and public parks and included fruit, vegetables and herbs. These gardens were encouraged by the local governments to help boost personal food rations and moral, and to minimize the demand on an overburdened public food system. Home grown produce freed up trains and transport trucks to move more strategic goods rather than food during the war. Gardner's could feel empowered by their contribution of labor and rewarded with the produce grown. They were a patriotic form of wholesome leisure. The gardens produce was also a part of a healthy diet which lead to healthier stronger citizens. These gardens produced up to 40% of the produce that was consumed during war times.



Why grow a Victory garden today? These days our public food system is not overburdened and we are fighting a different kind of war, a global pandemic. Victory looks different, to eradicate the virus we need to be healthy and follow safe social distancing practices. People

are encouraged to stay home, limit their exposure to others and reduce the amount of times they go into a grocery store in a week. These new rules have changed the way we live in the world, people are home from

school and work and limiting their social bubble. Many have a loss of income and are living off much less than in the past, all have lost social connections and regular activities that made life fun and exciting.

Our Victory garden at the school will produce much more food than I can eat alone. I have connected with local food security groups like Greenways Land Trust and the Food Bank to get the surplus of food we grow this summer out to the community. I also hope that more students and their families will connect to the garden and come in the summer and harvest food to take home for their dinners.



Another benefit of the Victory garden is that it has given me a purpose, a project to work on, something to build and accomplish. Any time a new little green leaf pops out of the ground where I planted seeds, I am amazed and overjoyed. I have a job to keep these plants alive, water, weed and tend to them. Someday soon I will be rewarded with beautiful fruit and vegetables.



Gardening is quite physical and is outdoors in the fresh air and sunshine. Physical activity produces serotonin which is the happy chemical naturally found in your brain, feelings of depression and sadness have been linked to low serotonin levels. You can naturally increase those levels with physical activity. I find that after sitting in front of a computer for a few hours I

need to get out and move. I love getting out into the garden and digging in the dirt, soaking up the sun and breathing in the fresh air. It reminds me that life goes on and makes me happy.

Gardening has a new spin on victory these days. It provides people some independence from the corporate food system giving them some freedom to spend their limited hard-earned dollars on other more pressing costs. It connects people to community, whether through socially distant community gardening or sharing excess produce with others. It gets people closer to the natural environment and teaches a long-lost life skill of growing your own food. Any way you look at it, gardening is a good thing.

## Kitchen 42

By Brian Smith



*Kitchen42*, is a new collaborative culinary effort between Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows School District chef-instructors and their

students. *Kitchen42's* participating chef-instructors: Brent McGimpsey (Garibaldi), Brian Smith (Thomas Haney), Trevor Randle (Maple Ridge) and Kyle Tillotson (Samuel Robertson).

The genesis of the concept was conceived at the last BCCASA conference in Victoria. A leisurely walk between the various venues began a conversation on expanding the collaboration that exists at the BCCASA conference and ways in which it could spill over into the district level. The conceptualized idea for a long table dinner was soon at hand. Due to the fact that SD42's teaching kitchens consists of two veteran teachers and two teachers that are just beginning their journey as educators, holding a collaborative event was



thought to be a great way to share knowledge, build camaraderie, and to have fun and eat well. Many different concepts were envisioned and discussed before the final result.

The inaugural *Kitchen42* collaboration dinner was held on Valentine's Day, in the Rotunda at Thomas Haney Secondary which featured a gourmet six-course meal. The menu for the long table dinner included amuse bouche, beef consommé, charcuterie board, chicken wellington, s'more and mignardises. Adjunct Professor of Home



Economics at UBC's Faculty of Education, Joe Tong graciously accepted the offer to be emcee for the evening and the Garibaldi senior band entertained the crowd between courses. The dinner also served as a fundraiser for the SD42 culinary trip to New York City.

The evening was well received among the attendees to the event and the participating student volunteers. As Trevor Randle explains, "Kitchen42 is a really cool concept. We wanted to showcase the passions and talent of our local culinary arts programs and to offer unique dining experiences to our entire community," adding "This event was for anyone who wanted to enjoy a very upscale Valentine's dinner for a great price. It's four chefs, six courses. It was a great opportunity for our student-chefs to cook for their friends, family and community members. I think that was one of the best functions that I have been part of."



# Fresh Flavours Cooking Series

In a recipe rut? With summer just around the corner, now is the perfect time to freshen up your recipe repertoire and incorporate new ideas!

BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation (BCAITC) can help! BCAITC, in conjunction with BC Greenhouse Growers' Association, is pleased to present the new Fresh Flavours Cooking Series for BC Greenhouse Veggie Days. A celebration of fresh, BC greenhouse produce, the cooking video series follows BCAITC & SD42 celebrity Chef Trevor Randle as he makes an array of delicious dishes featuring succulent tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, and eggplant! Chef Randle infuses his passion for food education into his cooking instruction as he showcases his appreciation for locally grown foods.

The Fresh Flavours Cooking Series for BC Greenhouse Veggie Days features the following recipes:

- Local Roasted Greenhouse Tomato and Bell Pepper Sauce with Rigatoni
- BC Tomato Chutney
- Roasted BC Peppers
- Roasted Greenhouse Tomato and Bell Pepper Soup
- Panzanella (Tuscan Bread Salad)
- BC Greenhouse Vegetable Sushi with Sriracha Aioli

Find these recipes at [www.bcaitc.ca](http://www.bcaitc.ca) and share them with family and friends to enjoy nutritious meals and learn about healthy cooking.

Interested in learning more about how greenhouses work and how they provide fresh produce year-round? Visit [www.bcaitc.ca](http://www.bcaitc.ca) for informative and educational video tours of local greenhouses.



BCAITC is a non-profit, charitable organization that works with educators to bring local agriculture to BC students. Together with farmers, teachers, and agriculture specialists, we teach students about the story of agriculture and food in BC.

# NOTES FROM THE BACK OF HOUSE

...great thoughts on what we do

## Culture of the Kitchen

by Rene Redzepi, August 19, 2015

\*this article contains colourful language

I started cooking in a time when it was common to see my fellow cooks get slapped across the face for making simple mistakes, to see plates fly across a room, crashing into someone who was doing his job too slowly. It wasn't uncommon for me to be called a worthless cunt or worse. It wasn't uncommon to reach for a pan only to find that someone had stuck the handle in the fire and then put it back on my station just to mess with me.

I watched chefs—mine and others—use bullying and humiliation to wring results out of their cooks. I would think to myself: Why is that necessary? I'll never be like that.

But then I became a chef. I had my own restaurant, with my own money invested, with the weight of all the expectation in the world. And within a few months I started to feel something rumbling inside of me. I could feel it bubbling, bubbling, bubbling. And then one day the lid came flying off. The smallest transgressions sent me into an absolute rage: Why the hell have you not picked the thyme correctly? Why have you overcooked the fish? What is wrong with you? Suddenly I was going crazy about someone's *mise en place* or some small thing they said wrong.

This was how I had been taught to cook, and it was the only way I knew to get a message through. I can't say that it didn't work for a time. Noma has succeeded beyond whatever I could have imagined for it.

And, concurrently, the cooking profession has been lifted out of the blue collar into something extraordinary. The level of respect that cooking and cooks receive is really astounding. The very act of cooking draws people into our world and our profession: they want to transform ingredients; they want to feel how lovely it is to make an omelet or cook a *crème brûlée* correctly for the first time.

The public expects more from us now. Questions arise: Is there still room for guys like me, who started before this new era? What about the French armies we trained in, the regiment we still follow? How can we rectify the screaming and shouting and physical abuse we've visited on our young cooks? How do we unmake the cultures of machismo and misogyny in our kitchens? Can we be better?

Perhaps, the real question is this: Do we want to be better?

I've been a bully for a large part of my career. I've yelled and pushed people. I've been a terrible boss at times. For some reason, I'm particularly bothered when I remember a girl from Colombia who was working for us, whom I really liked. One night, we had some big-time guests in the restaurant—journalists from somewhere I can't recall. I had given her directions and she had said, "Yes, Chef," and then when it was time to do her task, she didn't do what she was told. This happens. People say "yes," but they have a thousand things on their mind and aren't paying attention.

I went completely crazy. I pulled her out of service, and I screamed at her: "What the fuck are you doing? Go home." It was a really bad moment. I tried calling her to apologize, but even after we'd spoken, I could feel that the air still wasn't clear. Later that night, as I was walking home with Christian Puglisi, who was the sous chef at the time, he turned to me and said, "I have to tell you, Chef, you stepped over the line. I owe it to you to tell you that."

It was a punch in the gut to hear that from my sous chef—my closest ally, someone who was my friend and followed my lead all of the time. I went home and stayed up half the night thinking about it. I really wanted to work with this cook for years to come, but I was going to scare her away. And on a simpler level, I felt horrible for being so cruel to a person.

That moment was only part of a long, protracted revelation. Over time, I realized that my behavior was hurting some of my long-standing staff—people whom I loved and enjoyed the company of—and it was influencing them to act the same way. It wasn't leading toward greater health for myself, for my family, for my wife, for my children. Who wants to go to work angry every day? I certainly didn't want that, especially having three young daughters. I thought about what kind of world they'd grow up in. It wasn't a question of gender—it was about straightening up my act for the sake of my children.

It's been a slow evolution—some of it really slow. There are always things you want to do that will take a long

time to implement. Maybe there's no money, or maybe you're fighting momentum. But for the first time in my career, I started to buy into the idea of instilling a more respectful, humane spirit into the restaurant.

I'm not talking about cutting out discipline or the pirate ship-like camaraderie of the kitchen. The kitchen needs discipline, codes of conduct, a clear chain of command. Cooks need to feel like they're part of a group that's pushing together. A restaurant needs organization and quality control. And when people feel more confident, people cook better. They make good decisions in critical moments, and that is what cooking is. Does it need a little more salt? A little less? That's the difference between success and failure.

The pressure will always be there. There will always be competition and adrenaline. But how you handle yourself in those moments is crucial. We can't take the boiling points out of service, so what we need to do is find tools to handle them better.

Sometimes I'll still gather people around and shout at them when I have to wake them up from whatever trance they're in. But there's a difference between singling people out and addressing the team as a whole. It's like being a coach in a time-out at a soccer match. Everybody's on the same level. You assess the situation, and you move on.

I tell my chefs that I'm the only person who should ever shout. I don't want anyone else to go crazy. I don't want people to call one another names. We've let really talented people go because they had a bad attitude or weren't respectful. We put a purposeful emphasis on making the

environment friendlier to women, so we're not just making obscene, pornographic jokes all day. It's not about losing a sense of humor; it's about being more clever in all things and letting the humor follow.

The smallest changes have also worked for us. Playing music in the kitchen, for instance. And real staff meals where you sit down to eat together. We had to change our opening time from six to seven to allow for a one-hour dinner break, but it was worth it. For too long I've been eating out of a plastic container while standing next to my section, and I don't want my cooks getting accustomed to the same thing.

Maybe change starts with schools. The chef curriculum is outdated. You show up at school, they hand you one book and you treat it like the Bible. I've seen the book from the CIA, and I remember the book here in Copenhagen. We need new books, and one dedicated to how you deal with guests, waiters, cooks, and producers—a manual on basic human interaction.

At this point, you're thinking, Whatever, René, this is all easy for you to say, but things are different where I'm from. If I want to punch my dishwasher and tell him he's an asshole, it's because that's what needs to happen. You don't know what works at my place.

And you're right. We don't have as much pressure to perform financially here in Copenhagen as one might in New York or London. That's fine. Let's think about this in terms of the bottom line.

Maybe the old way has worked so far. But in the long run, it burns people out. There's a reason people are struggling to find cooks right now. Our industry is populated by young people. As they

get older, they fall out of the trade because they can only take the abuse when they're young and strong. How many of your cooks are thirty-two, thirty-three, thirty-four years old? Maybe the head chef and the sous chef—that's it. We're on course to really mess things up if we don't start getting better at what we do.

I want things to change for the sake of this profession. When we started trying to change the culture at Noma, we did it for the sake of our own happiness. I didn't expect that it would also make us a better restaurant. But it did. This has worked for us. I genuinely do see the improvement in the staff's morale, in our guests' satisfaction, in the quality of our creativity and execution.

I've had staff members come to me and say, "I don't feel like you're stern enough. I'd like you to go back to how you were seven years ago." Sometimes, when I see someone working in a messy, disorganized way, or working without thinking, I have to stop myself from resorting to my earlier tactics. That's the crux of our situation right now—the choice in front of us: cooking has managed to creep out of the Dark Ages. The opportunities for cooks to be active leaders in environmental and social movements are real and unprecedented in our profession.

But the only way we will be able to reap the promise of the present is by confronting the unpleasant legacies of our past, and collectively forging a new path forward.

*This story from René Redzepi is a conversation starter originally published in the Fantasy Issue of the now defunct Lucky Peach magazine. Republished and sourced at MAD <https://madfeed.co/2015/culture-of-the-kitchen-rene-redzepi/>*

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Have something to share?  
Response to an article?  
Recipes?  
Wanna join the Executive?

**LET US KNOW!**

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It is important that we keep  
BCCASA current; sharing the ideas  
and voices of  
Chef Instructors throughout BC!

