

Fruit Tarts on Fire

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Photo: Noriko Tidball

Think the heat of a pan on fire from searing sirloin. Think Gordon Ramsay channeling his anger into a fruit tart. Think Mark Jang, Youth TRAIN in Trades grad and Red Seal chef.

Mark discovered the love of cooking in Grade 9. He was a shy and clumsy student, but one day in his Home Economics class, he found the one thing he wasn't clumsy at: cooking. He marveled at how he had created a cupcake and realized that his passion was culinary arts.

Mark heard about the Youth TRAIN in Trades program already in Grade 9, but he still had several years to wait. In Grade 11, he applied for the Culinary Arts Youth TRAIN in Trades program, filling out the paperwork and going to an interview with the career program facilitator. So anxious to become a chef, though, he watched YouTube videos, learning new recipes and cooking techniques while waiting to get into the program.

When Grade 12 finally arrived, he couldn't have been happier even though it meant he had less time to spend with his friends at his home school, John Oliver Secondary.

Mark spent alternating days between John Oliver where he completed his academic courses and electives and Tupper where he was completing the culinary arts program, which would give him his first-year ITA training upon graduation from high school.

Not only did Youth TRAIN in Trades provide him with many of the skills necessary to be a cook, it also connected him to Cactus Club Café for work experience where he has been hired as a permanent employee.

Mark loves the adrenalin rush he gets from the stressful and fast-paced work environment. The multitasking that comes with it has helped him learn to improvise, he says. On most mornings, he arrives at 6 a.m. to prep for the day. Working



in a restaurant is “like 10 to 12 hours of P.E.,” but he still finds the motivation to wake up every morning because he’s doing something, he is passionate about.

Mark recently obtained his Red Seal certification which involved creating a four-course meal in five hours and passing a theory exam, the ITA Interprovincial Examination, with a mark of 70 per cent.

Recently, Mark has been creating his own recipes. Some of them are influenced by Cactus Club, but others are completely original. Like in Grade 9, he still loves to bake, and his favorite dish will always be fruit tarts.

For more information on the Cook Training program, go to: <http://bit.ly/2gQgixq>

