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MURRAY RIVER CULINARY CHALLENGE

Sunraysia Institute of TAFE, Koori VCAL students Tessa Clark and Tamara Marshall took out the Murray River Culinary Challenge hospitality competition Grand Final on Wednesday 5 September 2007 in Echuca.

The Challenge, which started with 300 VET in schools hospitality students competing from 23 different schools along the Murray between Mildura to Yarrawonga, came down to five teams in the final on Wednesday.

This year's Grand Final saw Tamara and Tessa compete against teams from Deniliquin High School, Swan Hill College, St Joseph's College Echuca, and Notre Dame College Shepparton. The students competed at an outstandingly high level that impressed the five judges, all leaders in the Hospitality industry.

Students had two and a half hours to impress the judges with the menu featuring an entrée of smoked trout and spinach tart with roasted pumpkin, feta, rocket and lemon vinaigrette; a main course of pan fried lamb medallion with a trio of mushroom and red wine served with tomatoes, asparagus and rice pilaf; and a dessert of crepes suzette.

Judge, Michael Stokes of Cobram Barooga Golf Club said 'Our young future chefs displayed their talent, technique and tenacity. Hospitality's future employees are getting an insight into an industry, which takes a lot of passion to enjoy and succeed. All students who competed were winners.'

This program is now in its second year, and has seen the number of competitors more than double since its inception. Developed by five Local Community Partnerships (LCPs) along the Murray, the Challenge tests the skills and knowledge of VET in Schools Hospitality students, promotes the hospitality industry in the Murray River regions, and uses only local produce in all the recipes.

From Hospitality trainer, Anne McDonald, Mildura Senior College "Thank you to the LCPs along the Murray for having the vision to create this opportunity for VET in Schools students to showcase their skills. This competition is an excellent avenue to raise the profile of careers within the hospitality industry and create partnerships between schools, industry and whole communities".

The event has been so successful that it has drawn corporate sponsorship this year from Lindemans Winery, Sun Rice, Swan Hill International College and Carriages restaurant, Moama Bowling Club and the GV Hotel.





JOB PROFILE - WAITER

Waiters, who are also known as food and beverage attendants work in a busy and exciting job, which requires good communications skills, and excellent customer service skills. Waiters work in all different types of establishments such as restaurants, hotels, pubs and clubs. Waiters must be a minimum age of 18 years old to service alcohol.

HOW DO I BECOME A WAITER ?

There are no formal requirements for training to work as a waiter, however there are a number of qualifications that would prepare you for working in the industry and they are:

- Certificate II in Hospitality (Operations)
- Certificate III in Hospitality (Operations)

A lot of employers prefer to find their staff through recommendations of existing staff members. Or you could approach your local restaurateur for and ask for a job.

WHAT PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES DO I NEED TO BECOME A WAITER?

- Excellent personal presentation
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Commitment to providing excellent customer service
- High level of personal cleanliness and hygiene
- Good communication skills
- Able to work efficiently and speedily

HOW MUCH CAN I EARN AS A WAITER ?

Waiters on average have a weekly earning of approximately \$500 before tax.

HOW MANY HOURS CAN I EXPECT TO WORK IN A WEEK ?

The hours for a waiter vary greatly with a large amount of evening and weekend work. A large number of employees in the industry are employed on a part-time or casual basis.

WHAT ARE MY EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS?

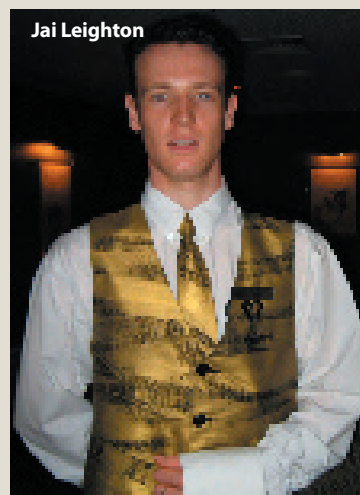
Employment prospects for waiters are good with most of the industry experiencing a skill and labour shortage of waiters. Future job growth is expected to be moderate with growth of the industry expected to continue at approximately 7%.

IF I WANT FURTHER INFORMATION WHERE CAN I GO?

If you have internet access, have a look at the following websites for further information: www.discoverhospitality.com; www.myfuture.edu.au; www.jobsearch.gov.au/joboutlook; www.serviceskills.com.au.

INDUSTRY LEADER

Meet one of Australia's Leading young waiters – Jai Leighton



Jai Leighton is only 22 now and when he won The Lexus Young Waiter of the Year he was only 21!

Jai grew up in the Services Industry with his parents running an amusement business.

In the early days of high school Jai thought the retail industry was for him and he achieved both a Certificate II and III in Retail whilst at High School. His first job was at Big W. However, the more

he learnt about the hospitality industry the more it appealed to him. After completing year 12, Jai enrolled in Regency TAFE and completed an Advanced Diploma of Hospitality studying full time for 2 years.

His first job in the hospitality industry was at Sky City Casino in Adelaide. Jai found that working in a Casino environment wasn't exactly what he was looking for and approached one of his lecturers about finding a new job. The lecturer suggested the Hilton Hotel, and within a week Jai had started as a Food and Beverage Attendant at the Hilton.

Jai has now been at the Hilton for nearly 3 years and has experienced working in all the Food and Beverage outlets. Jai says that one of the great things about his job is "I love food and wine and I am learning so much, there is always something new to learn".

Jai plans to stay at the Hilton and would like to move up to working as a team leader. However, ultimately he would like to own his own business where he can "create my own experience for the guest"

For more information on the Lexus Young Waiter of the Year please go to: www.youngchef.com.au



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