

Subject: Feedback
Title: Observation – “Kitchen Class” – Adult Education
Teacher: Akis Staboulis / Helsinki Culinary School Perho
Students: Thursday: 12 students / Friday: 11 students
Topic: Lunch Dishes / Cooking Methods
Date/Time: 28.04.2011 / 13:00 – 17:00
29.04.2011 / 11:30 – 13:30

Some facts:

The school received an education permit from the government on 11 January 1935. The first students began their studies on 11 February of the same year. The school did not yet have its own building. The present building was designed by Professor Aarne Ervi and it was completed in 1957.

It has a very bright and impressive stairway with a beautiful view to the adjoining buildings and surroundings.

The school has been being renovated the last years, our visit yesterday and today took place in kitchen number 6 on the second floor, a top modern equipped one with induction cooker, gas cooker, an electric cooker with ceramic glass cooktop, one big dishwasher for the catering and hotel industry, several freezers, food processors, of course lots of pots and pans and so on.

Akis told us that the induction cooker (~ hob) is hand made and comes from France. The facilities were really expensive but a main aim of the Helsinki Culinary School Perho is the best preparation of the students to the real job live, e. g. they should be able to handle all possible devices optimally.

Helsinki Culinary School gains around 450 students a year. It offers several programmes for cooks and/or waiting staff, hotel receptionist etc. Some programmes are offered in English language.

The education lasts for 3 years (after secondary school graduation) or for 2 years (after high school graduation).

Sonja and I visited an international adult education group. One main point of this programme is the strict condition of admission. Each year approx. 260 students apply for this education but only 20 of them get a positive answer (an interview is one part of the selection). Helsinki Culinary School Perho always builds groups of about 10 Finnish students and 10 foreign students. Working language is English.

After finishing the education the students get a basic degree for their respective education.

Helsinki Culinary School Perho is very successful in its education of cooks and/or waiting staff, hotel receptionists etc. not only in Finland but also abroad. Several prizes and awards shown in a vitrine at the administration centre tell the great story of success of Perho.

Following things might be the keys to success of this school.

- Huge on-the-job-learning periods for the students (about 10 to 20 weeks a year)
- Possibilities to go abroad – Perho has several cooperations with restaurants etc. in Sweden, Belgium, Germany, Spain, and of course in Finland – important is that Perho decides where the students could do their practical training and not the students themselves!
- Students are responsible for school cleaning (!) (except of the administration centre)
- Education is free (as in all Finnish Schools) – the students have to buy themselves only the books, the work clothes, the safety boots and a set of knives.

Procedure:

Akis welcomed us in his class. Sonja and I shortly introduced ourselves and Akis told us some basic facts about the school and this international group.

Afterwards he started to explain and to discuss the kitchen procedure with his students.

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| Procedure: | 13.15 – 13.30 | Start of the lesson |
| | 13.30 – 16.30 | Discussion and preparation of the four-course meal |
| | 16.30 – 17.15 | Starting with the first course / Serving the four-course-meal |
| | 17.15 – 18.00 | Kitchen cleaning |
| | 18.00 | Day's close |

Akis always supported his students the best way. There were four teams (for preparing the four-course meal) and most of the time he assisted them in their work.

The other time he gave us further basic information about the school, his education, his way of teaching etc.

It was a very interesting and informative discussion with him. We enjoyed staying these two days with Akis and his group.

In addition to it we got delicious meals on each day and in our opinion they are worth to be mentioned:

Thursday:

- Asparagus soup with bread
- Salmon with false creamed morels and new potatoes ==> traditional Finnish menu
- Lamp rump steak with Daphnoise potatoes and thyme sauce
- Berries with zabaglione and almond cookies

Friday:

- Asparagus with poached egg and lemon zest vinaigrette and bread
- False morel soup with Parma ham chips
- Fried pike perch with white wine sauce
- Strawberry sorbait with vanilla sauce

Every course was really excellent.

Today Akis additionally showed us the whole school. The school also has its own public restaurant where several dishes are served every day (lunch buffet at noontime and à la carte menus in the evening).

There are also some functional rooms in this school, which companies and guests could rent for several occasions. Perho is nearby Helsinki's biggest cemetery and due to this mourners are often guests in Perho.

Furthermore we also had a short but interesting discussion with the headmaster of the school. She presented the school programme, the innovative ideas and the challenges of Perho to us.

Our statement:

Akis is a very professional, smart and realistic teacher, he puts emphasize on a close and good cooperation with the catering trade outside.

Furthermore he insists on punctualness, polite manners of his students and that they wear their work clothes and safety boots.

It's visible that Akis likes his job very much. You can feel the positive atmosphere between him and his students. The students themselves like to ask advice from Akis, they like to have a nice time and to joke with him.

We think Akis' strict rules, his profound knowledge, his good connections to the business life outside and his sense of humour are the main ingredients of his education and the reason why his students like him so much.

One big aim of him is the best preparation of his students to the business life. He also mentions very often to the students that becoming a cook and/or a waiter/waitress is not an easy way of life.

We also like his evaluation of the meals. His way is firstly finding all positive facts and then if necessary discussing the improvable ones (by the way – the meals of these 2 days were excellent!).

Sonja and I really enjoyed our two days stay at the Helsinki Culinary School Perho and we want to say again THANKS AKIS FOR YOUR INVITATION and the possibility for seeing so many interesting things and for hearing your ideas, thoughts, minds, teaching methods etc.