

Culinary Art Review



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May 2017, Issue 02

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Chef Robin Villarreal & The 3rd Bolu Izzet BAYSAL International Food Competition in Bolu, Turkey



From April 28 to April 30, 2017, took place the 3rd Bolu Izzet BAYSAL International Food Competition in Bolu, Turkey. Academic Director of Culinary Arts Institute at Varna University of Management, Chef Robin Villarreal was invited to the competition as a jury.

“Bolu is a city, located in the middle of Ankara and Istanbul. From Istanbul to the region is about 3 hours. But we reached to Bolu during 8 hours, as the organizers decided to change the path and to show us the black sea costal area, which has an amazing and wonderful view.”





How was the organizational level of competition?



This culinary competition in Bolu is still young. This year was the third time they have done it. Still the competition needs to overcome some activities, for example, the city of Bolu is not as developed as the capital city and there are a lot of challenges for competitors to get the ingredients. Inaccessibility of some products made discomfort, and some participants brought products from their hometowns, instead of having fresh products from the region.

Which moment was memorable for you while being part of such competition?

The most memorable moment for me was when the organizers made a special competition within disabled kids having passion in cooking. These kids were so enthusiastic. For safety reasons they had supervisors for helping them to accomplish with the tasks. This was very nice! You could see how happy and motivated they were, enjoying the time spent with us. They put their hearts in making the dishes and even, the dishes of some disabled kids compared with others were much better in terms of taste. They did not do anything fancy, but what they did was full of passion. This moment was really very memorable for me, since, despite the disability they do what they really like and they are able to do it with a pleasure.

In terms of culinary arts industry, what is the difference between Turkey and Bulgaria ?



Number one difference is the economy. Turkish economy is stronger than Bulgarian. Let us compare Sofia and Istanbul. In this comparison, the population of Istanbul is bigger than Sofia's. The amount of culinary influence is huger as well, because of the size of city, products and also the buying power. All these factors impact on culinary industry. For example, you can see the big difference also in the accommodation. Turkey has famous and high quality hotels such as, Shangri La, Four Seasons, etc. Sofia has also high quality hotels, but a lot of the top hotels are missing. The reason is the difference of buying power. Turkey is more ahead in terms of gastronomy quality than Bulgaria.



I liked the spirit of the competition, the spirit of the teams!

The majority of participants were students from high schools, the rest there from the universities. I liked the most, when the kids were helping each other, despite the fact that they were from different schools, teams and nationalities competing against each other. For example, you could see that when one team finished and another one should start, some of the participants were asking to borrow the pots and pans. And even they were helping each other to set up the stations. This was very nice!

Also, I liked the fact that they were cleaning after themselves. They really were paying attention to this. It was very professional.

And the last but not the least, the hospitality of the hosts was one of the highlights.

What I disliked was the music. The same I mentioned for Plovdiv competition. It would be nicer, if they lower down the music, because it is unfortunate for the competitors who are closer to the speakers. Also for the judges it is not easy to hear all the time loud music.