

Culinary Art Review



The 10th National Culinary Cup Bulgaria 2017 & Culinary Arts Institute at Varna University of Management

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Chef Robin Villarreal

Chef Robin Villarreal has an impressive background of knowledge and experience:

- Member of pre-opening/founding team and Pastry Chef of Le Cordon Bleu, Casa de Francia, Mexico City
- Member of the pre-opening/founding team and Executive Chef, Glion Institute of Higher Education at the Universidad del Valle de Mexico
- Member of pre-opening and founding team /Director/Member of the Academic Board/Head Chef Instructor of HRC Culinary Academy, Bulgaria
- Co-founder and Academic Operations Director of Culinary Arts Institute at Varna University of Management, Bulgaria



The "10th National Culinary Cup Bulgaria 2017" took place from the 20th till 22th of April, 2017 in Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

Chef Robin Villarreal was participating in the competition as a judge. Hereinafter, is provided an interview with the Chef related to the competition.

The competition had professional and non-professional competing categories. The categories were: Chef of the Year, the Best Junior Chef of the Year, Team of the Year, the Best Pastry Chef and the Best Junior Pastry Chef of the Year.

“What I liked is that, it is a venue which brings together different disciplines of the culinary arts.

What I disliked, maybe the music, which was playing in the background. It was too loud and it was giving a headache maybe not only me, but others as well.

Another thing which I disliked, in my opinion, is that the competition was too rushed. We did not have enough time to give proper feedback, also I felt that the judges were little bit rushed in evaluating the competitors, because of the close start times between the stages”.

It would be perfect if in a future the time period of evaluating will be changed. As a result, the competitors will get valuable feedback, by which they can improve and develop. The competition is a great idea, because this is the place where everybody can measure themselves with others and to feel different levels, and as a jury member, I was able to see how the level has been improved within the years. In the future, the competition will raise the level of culinary arts in the whole country and I believe it is doing this. For example, this year the level was higher than compared with previous years, especially for the Pastry discipline. It was the first time that the pastry had boxes for competing, which has been implemented by the Pastry Club in Bulgaria. This was a great idea, because for example, previous year pastry chefs brought their own ingredients, while this year all competitors had equal equipment, situation, time and proper judging. Since the boxes were there, it was a fair competition.

- How was the organized level?

It is very difficult to organize such competitions. Compared with the previous years, the competition is getting better. The funding is one of the main reasons which influences on the organized level. In Bulgaria, it is a problem compared with other countries such as Germany, Turkey, Italy, Greece and other Western European countries, where the government supports the organization community. In my opinion, this event was organized with its the best capacity.

- What kind of improvements could you recommend?

To make the event more organized...

One thing could be to make different starting times between the competitors. My recommendation is to fix for instance, 10 minute lapse start period within the participants, at the end when the competitors will start to present their dishes, the judges will have enough time to make the evaluation and to give a proper mark for his/her efforts.

Another recommendation of the improvement is to divide judges into specific categories for judgment. For example, to have a judge only for hygiene, another one of the technique and another one for the taste. That way it is easier and more fair to evaluate one item, rather than five items.

