



## COMPETITION

# Chefs chase crown



GARY NYLANDER/The Daily Courier

Peter Moscone, centre, of Gold Medal Plates explains to competing chefs the rules and procedures for the Canadian Culinary Championships Thursday at the Okanagan College cafeteria in Kelowna. The competition starts today and wraps up Saturday night.

# Students crucial ingredient as nation's 8 top chefs battle in cook-off to win title of Canadian Culinary Champion

By J.P. SQUIRE

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**F**or culinary arts students at Okanagan College, the Canadian Culinary Championships represent the experience of a lifetime.

They will work alongside the eight best chefs in the nation this weekend.

"They're all nervous," said culinary arts instructor Perry Bentley, one of the judges.

"Most of these students will work side by side

with their championship chef, helping them prepare the competition food. The students have everything to gain and nothing to lose."

More than 30 student volunteers signed up to help the winners of Gold Medal Plates events in eight cities. They are prepared to work for a gruelling, adrenalin-filled 48 hours, during which they can expect to be on their feet for as long as 15 hours.

This is the first time the competition to crown the Canadian Culinary Champion will be held outside a major urban centre.

That could make his students' hometown

expertise all the more precious, said Bentley.

"In many cases, it will be the students who will help direct the eight chefs around the kitchen and around the community, pointing them towards the best available products. For their part, the chefs will have to assess the talents of their student helpers to get the best from them."

Competing chefs have to be "fairly judgmental people" because time is of the essence, said Bentley.

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## Chefs

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"The chefs will quickly determine what the students can or can't do, and then they'll change their plan accordingly," Bentley said. "I've told the students to be as helpful as they can and to remember that they're learning."

The competition starts at 6 p.m. today with the Mystery Wine Pairing at the Hotel Eldorado. The Black Box, or second event, is 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday in the culinary arts department of Okanagan College.

"All I can say about what's in the Black Box is that it will feature local high-quality organic

products, and there will be something 'alive' as well that will be arriving from the purveyor at the crack of dawn Saturday morning," he said.

The third event is the Grande Finale at the Delta Grand hotel at 6:30 p.m. Saturday.

Chefs will prepare their best dish for guests to sample, paired with wine from their regional winery partner. The champion will then be crowned, with a victory celebration to follow.

The championships mark the culmination of a series of Gold Medal Plates events. Net proceeds from the Gold Medal Plates go to the Canadian Olympic Foundation to support athletes and high-performance programs such as Own the Podium. To date, more than \$4.1 million has been raised.