

# Chefs serve royals taste of B.C.

By **ANDREA PEACOCK**

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Prince William and Kate had a true taste of B.C. at Mission Hill Winery on Tuesday afternoon, as they sampled dishes created by several local chefs.

Bernard Casavant, president of the Okanagan Chefs Association, cooked up a wild mushroom pate with harvest squash and truffled purple cauliflower.

Serving the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge wasn't his first royal encounter.

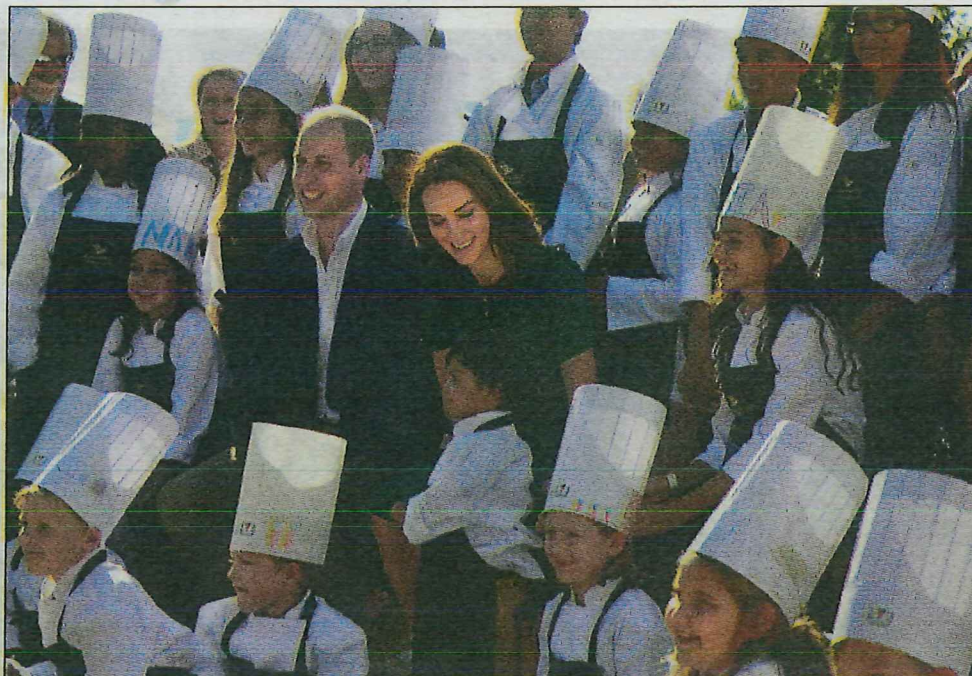
"I had the honour of cooking for Princess Diana and Prince Charles in '86 at Expo, so I've cooked for the royalty before," said Casavant.

The visit at Mission Hill Winery was much different though, he said.

"Last time, it was a quick introduction, then they were sequestered into the commissioner general's suite at Expo at the Canadian Club, and this time they were more engaged," said Casavant. "They obviously know their role but, at the same time, they seemed to enjoy the interaction, too, which was different than my previous experience."

Both the Duke and Duchess tasted all of the dishes presented to them, and even commented on specific elements of the food, said Casavant.

"They weren't just saying 'oh thank you very much, that was lovely,'" he said. "We



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**The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge meet with children from the Chefs in the Classroom program at Mission Hill Winery.**

worked long hours getting that food to the plate, so having them actually engaged was huge."

Ned Bell, executive chef of the Ocean Wise program based at the Vancouver Aquarium, was another chef who served the Duke and Duchess on Tuesday.

"I was all about wild B.C. seafood today, and they actually tried our wild B.C. sock-eye salmon," said Bell. "It was amazing. They loved it. We were told they may not try anything, but they tried every station."

Cooking for the royal couple was an experience Bell will never forget, he said.

"It was one of the career highlights of my life, for sure, to be able to say that I not only got to shake their hands, but also say hello to them and really champion our seafood here on the west coast," said Bell. "It was a pretty extraordinary opportunity."

All the chefs used solely B.C. ingredients in every dish.

"We saw this as really an opportunity to showcase what is grown in British Columbia by B.C. farmers," said Stan Vander Waal, chair of the B.C. Agriculture Council.

Anthony von Mandl, proprietor of Mission Hill Winery, took Prince William and Kate on a private tour of the wine cellar, where they tasted wine and learned about the winemaking process.

"I could have never believed and dreamt this moment would come," said von Mandl. "They are so amazing, gracious (and) interested in wines in the region. I think they had a lot of fun."

Von Mandl also showed the Duke and Duchess a special bottle of wine in his collection from when Queen Elizabeth II visited Vernon in 1983.

"Mission Hill provided the wine back then, and I have one bottle in my collection," he said.

Von Mandl sent Prince William and Kate home with a six-litre bottle of Oculus wine.

"I think it will be a memory of their remarkable visit here," he said.