

GOLD MEDAL PLATES

Competitors fill in so chefs can compete in Kelowna

Nation's top chefs converge on the Okanagan next weekend

Feb 3 A4

Special to The Daily Courier

While a team of Newfoundland chefs represent their province at the Canadian Culinary Championships in Kelowna, another group of area chefs will be pitching in to make sure their restaurant stays open.

Chef Mike Barsky, sous chefs Ivan Kyutukchiev and Matt McDonald and wine expert Andrea Maunder from the Bacalao restaurant will be in Kelowna for the Gold Medal Plates Canadian Culinary Championships, Feb. 8-12.

In the true Newfoundland style of coming together to face a challenge, chefs

Todd Perrin (the Chef's Inn), Steve Watson (Central Dairies), Roary MacPherson (Sheraton Hotel Newfoundland), Mark McCrowe (Aqua), Shawn Hussey (Chinched Bistro), Chris Sheppard (Bonavista Institute), Roger Andrews (College of the North Atlantic) and Steve Gugelmeier (Delta Hotel) volunteered their talents to keep Bacalao open during the competition.

"This is a historic first step in creating a safety net for small restaurant owners, for whom the costs associated with out-of-province culinary competitions are too prohibitive to allow them to take part," said Nancy Brace, executive director of the Restaurant Association of Newfoundland Labrador.

"It is also a wonderful show of camaraderie within the industry."

"We are floored by the generosity.

While it is an honour to represent the province in Kelowna, the financial commitment is significant ... ingredients for 600 plates, travel, accommodations and then the additional factor of closing the restaurant while we are away.

"Now we can focus on the competition and know the restaurant is in great hands," said Maunder, co-owner of Bacalao. "Essentially, by doing this, the chefs have become part of our team in Kelowna."

The Bacalao team won the gold medal at the regional Gold Medal Plates culinary competition in St. John's in November (a national event raising money to support Olympic athletes).

Bacalao restaurant offers an innovative presentation of Newfoundland cuisine with a focus on local produce, products and spirits, seafood and game.