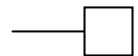


WACS Africa/Middle East Continental Director's Report

Prepared May 2006
By Arnold Tanzer





Once again, at 33 thousand feet above sea level I am truly amazed at the ease and relatively cheap cost of flying 15000 kilometres to Auckland from South African for the 32nd World Association of Chefs Association bi annual congress.

I have tried to work out the cost if I could drive all the way and since my diesel Mercedes Vito averages about 800 kilometres to the tank at a top speed of 180 kilometres per hour it would theoretically take 1312.05 litres of fuel and 3.5 full days to reach Auckland without the necessary toilet stops, refuelling and obligatory truck stop café cum roadside dinner meals stops.

Okay, so aeroplane food is not exceptional, not on any plane nor in any class. And this has nothing to do with the factory that prepared it but rather because in the pressurised cabin our taste buds have gone a bit dull... But the food notwithstanding - after a flight of 14 hours to Sydney and then another three to Auckland, arrival in the middle of the night to start a board meeting a few hours later, I was excited to be in the Land of the long white cloud.

My excitement stemmed not from only arriving at midnight on my birthday, sadly no dancing girls at the customs desk to welcome me into New Zealand, but the fact that finally, I would experience for myself the country that is even more down under than Down Under. Maoris, the All Blacks, 44 million sheep, birth place of the Bungee Jump, traditional Hangi and new world wines...

New Zealand did not disappoint. It was great meeting so many chefs again after the two years, many who I had met at the last congress in Dublin and also many more who I had met over the last two years as continental director. For those who did not make it to Auckland, I refer you to the WACS website for more detailed info.

The more observant of you reading this article will notice the our global fraternity now has a new name and if you have surfed the web lately you will have noticed a brand new look to both the website and our logo.

This initiative due to the diligent work by the board and in particular Dr Bill Gallagher and Peter Knipp will hopefully result in a slicker, more contemporary branding of our association. Full details and conditions of use are to be found under the official documents section.

The other exciting news from the congress is the ratification of the Global Chef Competition with the finals being held in Dubai 2008. Our regional continental finals will be held in Johannesburg, in March 2007 and further details will be sent to you all soon. The sad news is that only countries that are members of WACS or those that are paid up are eligible for this competition.

Later this year I wish to invite all associations from our region to a forum in Johannesburg, where we will be able to voice our concerns, set the path forward and generally meet each other on a face to face basis. Details and dates to follow shortly but keep a couple of days around the 20th of August free to visit the "City of Gold".



Of course the mention of dues will probably have most of you rolling your eyes.... Good news no increase! And the board has introduced a new tier in our membership - the affiliate member will pay a reduced fee for up to five years, have no vote at the Congress but enjoy the full benefits of being a member such as taking part in WACS endorsed competitions and the WACS certification. This will allow the recently formed associations to be part of the fraternity with all its advantages without a huge financial burden.

The ratification of the WACS Chef's Certification at the Congress has put two years of debate, discussion and testing to rest with the signing of the contract with the ACF in the final stages. Soon, right across the world there will be one certification for all. The programme will be developed and tuned into each region in order to accommodate cultural and cuisine differences yet each chef who has gone through the process, not matter where in the world will be on equal footing with regard to his certification. A similar Master Chef's Certification programme is in the process of being developed.

So as I board another flight, this time to judge a competition, I wish to remind you all that the new WACS Culinary Guidelines will be available shortly for all to review on the website and let me thank the team in New Zealand for a fantastic 5 days of cuisine, education, hospitality and friendship and to the team in Dubai, we wish you best of luck with your preparations for 2008.

As always,
Keep cooking!

Arnold Tanzer
Continental Director,
Africa and Middle East