



foodtalk

CREAM OF THE CROP *Spotlight on the world's finest dairy producers*
BRINGING THE HEAT *Angliss Singapore provides culinary joy at the Asian Masters*
A DELICIOUS DEPARTURE *Angliss HK helps classic hotel go out on a sweet note*
SAUCE OF INSPIRATION *Creamy toppings that will rock your world*

A Rare Talent

Andrea Spagoni
Beefbar Hong Kong



A Learning Curve to Pastry Perfection



By Karen Chiang

Photography by Chris Luk and courtesy
VTC International Culinary Institute

Though different generations, Chef Stephen Kan and Chef Roger Fok from Hong Kong's VTC International Culinary Institute share the same passion and goals for nurturing the next wave of culinary talent

Chef Stephen Kan

FT(Foodtalk): When did you discover your passion for baking and how did you get started in the industry?

SK(Stephen Kan): I loved desserts and cakes when I was young! I bought cookbooks and practiced baking at home, and when I was about 17, my uncle, who was a pastry chef at a hotel, helped me get my first job. I've never looked back, after more than two decades.

製作完美包餅 學習永無止境

Stephen Kan · 以及畢業於職業訓練局 (VTC) 國際廚藝學院的 Roger Fok — 兩位屬於不同年代的廚師 · 對培育香港下一代烹飪人才懷著同樣的熱情和目標

廚師 Stephen Kan

FT(Foodtalk): 您在什麼時候開始發現自己對包餅有著如此濃厚的興趣和熱誠? 您又是如何入行的?

SK(Stephen Kan): 我從小就喜歡吃甜品和蛋糕, 也會自己買食譜在家裡鑽研烘焙。在我大約17歲時, 我得到了在酒店當包餅廚師的叔叔的協助, 完成了第一件作品。二十多年後, 我慶幸自己當初選擇了這條路, 亦從沒想過回頭。





FT: What do you enjoy about being a pastry chef?

SK: The satisfaction when people enjoy my creativity and imagination ... also when I get the freedom to explore and create without limitations.

FT: How does teaching compare to working at a hotel?

SK: With teaching there is more freedom and time to try new things and experiment with the students. It is also wonderful to see students run with their ideas, and armed with skills they've learnt here, create something completely new.

FT: Why did you decide to move into a teaching career?

SK: After being in the industry for years, I wanted to give something back. I also found more satisfaction with teaching because of the two-way relationship with the students, and seeing them develop and hone their skills and techniques. It's very different from climbing the career ladder in the hospitality industry.

FT: You were tasked with creating the first pastry and baking course here at VTC. How did you go about doing that?

SK: We had a basic food preparation course as an outline, so I developed it from there, adding new information and

FT: 作為一位包餅廚師，您最享受的是什麼？

SK: 當我的創意和想像力獲欣賞時，便會感到很滿足。同時，我亦享受無拘無束地探索新的元素和創作不同的款式，讓顧客可以有更多選擇。

FT: 教學和在酒店工作有什麼不同？

SK: 教學可以給予我更多自由和時間嘗試新事物，亦可以和學生一起進行實驗。每次看到我的學生發揮創意，與所學的知識融會貫通，創作一些新穎作品時，我都會感到很欣慰，覺得自己的努力沒有白費。

FT: 您最初又是如何決定展開教學生涯？

SK: 在包餅界工作多年後，我希望回饋自己所屬的行業。教學可以和學生建立雙向關係，我能從中得到更大的滿足感。當看到他們發展自己的技能，並孜孜不倦地磨練技術時，那種開心的感覺更是不能言喻。這與一般在酒店業的專業發展架構中一步步攀升是截然不同的。

FT: 您在 VTC 的其中一個重任是在創立第一個包餅課程。當中的籌備過程是怎樣的？

SK: 我們最初以一個基本食物準備課程作為大綱，並逐步在課程中加入行業新資訊和個人經驗。我希望課程涉獵的範疇不單止一般包餅，便加入了結婚蛋糕和甜品等較特別的項目。



“ Have a concrete foundation of knowledge and skills, but also a positive attitude and forgiving heart. Be a team player and do everything with heart ”

「擁有豐富知識和技能基礎固然重要，但也要保持正面的態度和寬宏的心。此外，與團隊成員合作，耐心而投入地完成每份工作，並且謙虛地學習，也是十分重要的」

personal experience from the industry. I wanted elements beyond just baking and pastries, so you will see sections for wedding cakes, desserts and more.

FT: You encourage students to participate in culinary competitions. Why is that?

SK: Because by taking part in these kinds of events, you can learn so much and see new things you may not otherwise be exposed to. Especially at international competitions, where you can learn techniques from other cultures as well. These experiences will equip you for the future.

FT: How do you feel about hiring local versus foreign talents in Hong Kong's industry?

SK: Due to the popularity of western cuisine, specialists in this area are often in demand. Yet as all employers value performance, so if you can show you have the skills and talent, as a local, you may still be hired and given the opportunity to develop. We prepare our students through talks and competitions to keep them inspired and well equipped.

FT: 為什麼您會鼓勵學生參加烹飪比賽？

SK: 因為我相信學生可以透過參與這些活動獲益良多，並接觸新事物。尤其在國際比賽中，更可以從不同國家文化中學習其他烹飪技巧。這些經驗可以為他們將來的發展做好準備。

FT: 您認為在香港的烘焙業中，招聘本地和海外人才有什麼分別？

SK: 由於西方美食的普及，香港確實需要這方面的專家。所有僱主無疑都注重工作表現，故此若應徵者能證明自己擁有所需的技能和才華，那麼他們自然可以獲聘用，並有機會發展所長。我們舉辦講座和比賽，希望學生得到啟發，為未來事業做好準備。

FT: 您認為技術和創意哪一項比較重要？

SK: 掌握基本技能實在是非常重要的，因為這可以幫助你更快地適應新的元素。

FT: 作為一位廚師，您感到最自豪的作品是什麼？

SK: 當我仍在酒店工作時，我為總經理製作了一個九層結婚蛋糕，那是我以前從未見過的。幾乎有天花板那麼高！我當時特別選擇製作一個九層蛋糕，因為在中國文化中，「九」是象徵長壽的幸運數字。



Tea Set Fantasy



FT: What would you say is more important, technique or creativity?

SK: Getting the fundamental skills right is very important, and will help you adapt more quickly to new elements.

FT: As a chef, what have you created that you were most proud of?

SK: When I was still working at a hotel, I created a nine-tier wedding cake for my general manager, something I had never seen before. The height almost reached the ceiling! It was nine tiers because in Chinese culture nine is a lucky number symbolising longevity.

FT: If you had the opportunity to work with any chef, who would he be?

SK: Thomas Lui, one of Hong Kong's most awarded and celebrated pastry chefs. He's demanding about every detail and won't accept any fault or mistake but it would be a wonderful experience to work with such a creative local talent.

FT: What advice can you pass on to younger chefs?

SK: Have a concrete foundation of knowledge and skills, but also a positive attitude and forgiving heart. Be a team player and do everything with heart. Have patience and be modest.



FT: 如果有機會與任何一位廚師合作，您會選擇誰？

SK: 我會選擇 Thomas Lui，因為他是全港最有名而屢獲殊榮的包餅廚師之一。他對任何一個細節都一絲不苟，更不容許犯下任何錯誤。雖然這或許會有點壓力，但我深信與這樣一位富創意和才華的本地包餅廚師合作，將會是一次不可多得的經驗。

FT: 您對年輕一輩的廚師有什麼勸勉？

SK: 作為新一代廚師，擁有豐富知識和技能基礎固然重要，但也要保持正面的態度和寬宏的心。此外，與團隊成員合作，耐心而投入地完成每份工作，並且謙虛地學習，也是十分重要的。



Chef Roger Fok

FT(Foodtalk): What made you fall for baking?

RF(Roger Fok): I've liked cooking since I was a kid. I fell in love with pastries when I realised that they were as delicious as they were aesthetically pleasing! The artistic elements drew me in. I decided to make a career out of it and absolutely love it.

FT: What made you decide to make a career change from working in hotels to teaching?

RF: Skills and techniques should be passed on to the next generation. Within the industry, 80% of the people we employed were graduates from VTC courses, so the school plays a big role in shaping future industry talents.

FT: How is it different now compared to your previous hotel career?

RF: The priority of the school is the education of students, who are the 'product'. By learning techniques and skills, our students are prepared and inspired for great careers in the industry.

廚師 Roger Fok

FT(Foodtalk): 是什麼讓您那麼醉心烘焙工作？

RF(Roger Fok): 我從小就喜歡下廚。當我發現包餅不但美觀，亦美味無比時，我便愛上了包餅！我深信是當中的藝術元素吸引了我。因此，我便決定發展烘焙事業，也十分熱愛這份工作。

FT: 是什麼令您決定從酒店工作轉到教學？

RF: 我認為應把技能和技術傳承給下一代。烘焙行業的員工有80%是VTC課程的畢業生。因此，學校在培育未來行業人才方面發揮著重要作用。

FT: 與您之前的酒店工作相比，現在的教學生涯有什麼不同？

RF: 學校的首要任務是給予學生最好的教育。事實上，教育亦是我們所售賣的「產品」。透過學習烹飪技巧和技能，讓我們的學生做好準備並得到啟發，從而在烘焙專業中取得成就。

FT: 您以製作朱古力而聞名於業界，這與您在烘焙的其他範疇有什麼關係？

RF: 當我之前在酒店工作時，我的角色是包餅廚師，而不是朱古力師。我常對我的學生說，即使他們選擇專注於某一項烘焙範疇，



IC
Member of VTC Group
VTC HEALTH
Roger Fok

FT: You're known for working with chocolate, but how do you fare with other aspects of baking?

RF: When I was working at hotels, my role was as a pastry chef, and not a chocolatier. I tell my students that even if they choose to specialise, they need to have a grasp of general baking techniques. I chose to focus on pastry, but I can bake other items as well.

FT: So how did you become a chocolate specialist?

RF: It was very natural. When I joined the industry and first explored chocolate, I became intrigued with making sculptures and showpieces. As I gained knowledge through practice and experience I joined the World Chocolate Masters competition, which put me on the map as a chocolatier.

FT: What were your winning creations from that competition?

RF: The theme of the competition was inspiration from nature, and I chose to focus on flight, how observing birds led to the invention of airplanes. My creation has elements of this story, with airplanes and birds.



*Aviator
(World Chocolate
Masters 2015)*

也需要掌握一般的烘焙技術。雖然我選擇專注於包餅，但也懂得烘焙其他類型的食品。

FT: 那麼您是如何成為朱古力專家的？

RF: 其實一切都來得很自然。當我最初入行並首次接觸朱古力時，便對製作朱古力雕塑和展品產生了濃厚興趣。其後，我透過實踐和經驗而獲得相關知識，便參加了世界朱古力大師賽，這亦為我成為朱古力大師的工作生涯鋪路。

FT: 您在那場比賽中獲勝的創作是什麼？

RF: 比賽主題是大自然的靈感，我選擇以飛行為題材，作品描繪觀察鳥類如何幫助發明飛機。我的作品以飛機和鳥類作為故事的元素。

FT: 聽說您參加過很多比賽。從這些比賽中，您學到最重要的事情是什麼？

RF: 我所學到的，就是任何事都總有值得改進的地方。透過團隊成員與年輕新一代分享他們的所見所聞，令香港繼續保持在全球烘焙和包餅界所佔的席位。

FT: 您會說參加比賽是這個行業的重要一環嗎？

RF: 參加比賽絕對是我職業生涯的重要部分，因為我花了很多時間參加比賽。在參加比賽前，我會建議包餅廚師掌握所有基本技術，因為這有助處理在這些比賽中一些不可避免的意外挑戰。



Key of Taste (World Chocolate Master 2015)

“ I am a chef first. Technique, then creativity. ”

「我的一切都源於廚師的身份。緊隨的是技術和創意」



FT: You enter a lot of competitions. What is the most important thing you have learnt from them?

RF: My takeaway is that there is always room for improvement. Team members share their insights and experiences with younger members so we can maintain the standing Hong Kong has in the international world of baking and pastry.

FT: Would you say joining competitions is an important element in the profession?

RF: They have definitely been an important part of my career and I have devoted a lot of time to competitions. Before entering though, I would advise pastry chefs to master all the basic techniques, as this helps enormously in dealing with the unexpected challenges that invariably arise at these events.

FT: What influence have competitions had on your career?

RF: Competitions and other culinary forums, along with social media, have made building relationships and connecting with chefs all over the world much more convenient. In the past chefs tended to be more secretive, but now there is a culture of friendly competition and sharing between fellow chefs, which benefits everyone and helps us improve.

FT: Are you an artist first, or a chef first?

RF: I am a chef first. Technique, then creativity.

FT: Any final words of wisdom?

RF: Pastry is an art form, and demands time to perfect. Success does not always come at the first attempt. Every chef must practice, so believe in yourself, but also remember that there is always room for improvement. That is the key.

Peony (Harbour City Exhibition 2016)



FT: 比賽對您的職業有什麼影響？

RF: 烹飪比賽、各類烹飪活動和社交媒體，都可令我們更方便地與世界各地的廚師建立關係和連繫人脈。以往，廚師一般比較低調，並且會刻意保持神秘感。但現在行業中普遍有一種友善競爭的文化，廚師樂於在同業之間分享，這可促進個人學習，幫助我們做得更好。

FT: 您會形容自己是一位藝術家還是一位廚師？

RF: 我的一切都源於廚師的身份。緊隨的是技術和創意。

FT: 您有什麼箴言與我們分享？

RF: 包餅是一種藝術形式，需要時間才能臻於完美。一次的成功，往往需要多番嘗試。每位廚師都必須勤於練習。相信自己，也要記住凡事永遠有進步的空間。這正正是成功的關鍵。 