

A culinary challenge

Culinary Arts Academy (CAA) student Jesse Laking from Canada recently finished a practical training stint at the esteemed Domaine de Châteaux restaurant in Satigny, Switzerland. We asked him a few questions to find out more about his first experience in a kitchen outside CAA.



Chef Chevrier with CAA student, Jesse Laking

How do you feel your courses prepared you for this first in-training?

My basic cooking skills were very strong when I started at the restaurant and I felt I was well prepared for the challenges I was faced with.

How do you feel an experience like this will contribute to your future?

I learned that working in a gastro-style restaurant is extremely demanding. This will help me to choose which path, in terms of restaurant styles, I will follow in the future.

What was the best moment you have had during your training?

I had many great moments, mostly related to the very nice products we got to work with in the restaurant. Also, being a part of the team that prepared a special dinner for the Ferrari executives from around the world and a dinner for the UN Secretary General: these were great experiences.

Is there any advice you would give CAA students going on their first training experience?

They must be prepared to work hard. While working in a kitchen you may be criticized for your work but don't get discouraged by this as it will only make you better.

“ Jesse was able to better see what the profession is about, in particular concerning the amount of commitment needed and rigour of the work. Jesse learned many things while forming his character in real life. ”

Chef Philippe Chevrier of the Domaine de Châteaux

A green internship with a difference

Bianca Prado Vargas from Peru did a different internship from her fellow students. Bianca worked as a logistics assistant for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in their office in Switzerland and on site in Barcelona, Spain. This is her story.

Every four years, the IUCN holds the world's largest conservation congress. The focus of the congress was on how to improve the management of our natural environment.

My work involved making hotel bookings for the IUCN staff and so I needed to communicate directly with hotels. I also had to order furniture and audiovisual equipment for the exhibition rooms and offices and handle all the shipping of IUCN equipment and stationery to the convention centre. Once on site, I made sure the furniture and audiovisual equipment were arranged correctly. I also made last-minute hotel reservations for the staff and dealt with questions and problems. After the congress, I had to verify that all the bills were correct.

On site was the most challenging part. Working 17 days in a row, dealing with last minute details, taught me how to handle things calmly. It was, nevertheless, a great experience. I learned how important it is to be well organized.

My boss, the logistics manager Nadia Akhmisse, is also a “César Ritz” alumnus. Nadia gave me a challenging role and a lot of responsibility but she was also a good leader and role model who guided me through all the tasks.



Bianca (right) with Nadia Akhmisse and Fleurange Bieri