



Nicholas Wyman

Chief Executive
Institute for Workplace Skills & Innovation

Training Pathways at the Heart of Tokyo Culinary Scholarship

By Nicholas Wyman | Huffingtonpost | 29 October 2017

Young Australian Apprentice Chefs Alison and Ben have just arrived in Tokyo for an International learning experience that will comprise of cultural immersion into Tokyo's food scene including time at the famous Tsukiji Fish Market.

Also on the itinerary is a train trip to Kappabashi, a world-renown shopping district for the hospitality industry and chefs known for its pottery, knives, plastic food displays and catering equipment. The students will also taste-test rice crackers, mochi (Japanese rice cake) soba noodles. If you remember the restaurant from Quentin Tarantino's blockbuster 'Kill Bill' (also known as Gonpachi), that's another eatery the scholarship winners will check out. There's also a bit of downtime planned to cruise Tokyo Bay, the Sumida River and take in the Harumaki Gardens with its manicured cypress trees and teahouses in the shadow of the city's skyscrapers.

"I look forward to expanding my knowledge of Asian cuisine and techniques, developing skills and contacts in an overseas kitchen, improving my Japanese language skills, and immersing myself in Japanese culture," says recipient Alison.

Co winner Ben was shocked by the news that he had been selected for a dream scholarship; "This is awesome, the itinerary looks cool, and I am excited to be able to observe the culinary techniques of the masters in Japan. The Tsukiji fish market will be a highlight for me, a mate of mine has been, and ever since he told me about it"

The Ten-Year Apprenticeship

An interesting observation Ben and Alison will learn about Japan is that on-the-job training through an apprenticeship program is taken very seriously. Sukiyabashi Jiro in downtown Tokyo is one of the most famous sushi restaurants in the world. The restaurant has received an incredible three Michelin stars for six consecutive years. According to Michelin, the third star means it's worth visiting the



was proud to work with the sponsor Wisenet, who has a long association with the vocational training industry.

Its Director and Co-Founder Kim Yelland was a hospitality apprentice himself who went on to lecture on the subject and manage a student restaurant before co-founding the tech company.



country just to experience that restaurant.

At Sukiyabashi Jiro, the apprentice-master (what some would think of as the head chef) Jiro Ono expects no less than a ten-year commitment from his apprentices. For those who wonder what life is like, I recommend the fascinating documentary Jiro Dreams of Sushi which focuses on the eighty-five-year-old sushi master Jiro in his relentless pursuit of perfection as he passes on his knowledge and skills to his star apprentice: his fifty-year-old son Yoshikazu.

Skilling Australia Foundation Programs Advisor, Amy-Lou Cowdroy-Ling says "This kind of opportunity is life-changing, especially for a young person with limited exposure to other cultures." Skilling Australia Foundation

"The first thing that struck me about both Ben and Alison was their passion for preparing food for others – an essential ingredient for our aspiring chefs. Both presented a compelling case about their desire to explore new cuisines and develop an appreciation of world food culture," says Kim.

The scholarship winners are being guided by Tony Scimonello. He's an Australian born chef with extensive professional working experience in Japan.

About Nicholas Wyman

Nicholas Wyman is the CEO of the Institute for Workplace Skills and Innovation.

He is the Author of "Job U - How to Find Wealth and Success by Developing the Skills Companies Actually Need" published by Crown - a division of Penguin Random House. He speaks and writes on the business and leadership challenges companies face in finding skilled employees. Nicholas is a graduate of Harvard Business School and is a Churchill Fellow.

