

Tip of the Tongue: A career dedicated to learning and teaching

Fabien Parion has had a diverse career in gastronomy, earning his spot among the best. We took a few minutes to understand the role food plays in his life, how various encounters have shaped his approach on food, and how the world has begun to shift today.

Food is a subject that everyone enjoys talking about - why do you think that is the case?

Food has fed humans and their spirit for centuries. Food nurtures and is sacred. It identifies peoples and cultures.

So, what attracted you to become a chef and enter a competitive and stressful line of work?

My father was also a chef. Being a chef is a sharing job. We work to give pleasure to people. It's a great opportunity and a fascinating job that allows you to learn constantly.

Food waste has always been present in gastronomy. When did it start to become a real enough concern for the industry to start to combat it?

Only a few years ago, the industry became aware of the need to avoid waste, for ecological and economic reasons. In the word "*ecological*" there is "logic"!

Have you seen an attitude shift in the way chefs purchase, repurpose, and store food to extend its shelf life?

Chefs buy more reasonable quantities and suppliers are also adapting to this reality. Chefs are finally anticipating more than just their needs and also find ways to recycle and repurpose what that they use.

I understand you spent some time in military kitchens where homogenous meals were made daily for many people. What did you see in the kitchen that surprised you most?

Not much surprised me, except that to have strong soldiers with good morale, you have to feed them properly! By the way, always keep this in mind for your staff, friends, and family.

You've chosen to move into education. Is there a specific reason that pulled you in that direction?

The need to share. I do believe that the younger generation are the ones who will have the greatest challenge to feed the world in 30 years. Demographic studies show that it will be seriously necessary to anticipate needs. So if I can help a bit...

Through your extensive travels promoting programs in the hospitality field, can you think of a moment where you were most impressed with a situation or person or country in how they worked with food?

In Asia and Africa, I discovered extraordinary cooking methods and flavors. The happiness of my job is to unceasingly discover products, techniques, spices, and different cultures. We meet the identity of a country and its people through their diet. I am always impressed

each time I discover a new situation. My last emotional reflection brings me back to Sri Lanka with a special dish called Kotthu roti. When they make it, they cut it very quickly on special iron equipment. It was the very first time that the sound of a preparation led me to a restaurant.

And lastly, when you broke a Guinness world record for baking the largest pie in the world, how much did it weigh, and did any go to waste?

The weight was about 86 kilos, serving around 700 portions. What is very clever with this kind of meat pie or “pâté en croute” is to season your meat correctly, and add them into the pie. In this case, there was no waste at all! During a large event like this, believe me, everyone wanted to be a part of it. Someone even told me, “Chef, it’s as if I had a stone from the Berlin wall.” Can you imagine?

About Mr. Fabien Pairon

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Born in the south of Burgundy to a pork butcher, Fabien Pairon began working in the food business at the age of 15. Initially trained as a chef, he has worked in France and abroad, mainly in gastronomic restaurants and international catering service companies. After setting up his own catering and reception organization business in his home region and running it for 5 years, he obtaining his Education certification, and taught in a hotel school for 8 years. Being awarded the title “Meilleur Ouvrier de France” in 2011 gave his career a new dimension, leading him to teach at EHL.

Fabien is also the author of 3 books: Douceurs Charcutières (2015), MOF Recettes & Témoignages (Nov 2017), and Booklet of 6 recipes: De Buyer Geoform Mold (Dec 2017).

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