



Scholarship Program

VILLA CHARITIES CULINARY SCHOLARSHIP

Italian Program Scholarship (George Brown College) supported in part by The Food Dudes

Awards Summary

In September 2021, Villa Charities, with the support of The Food Dudes, generously donated \$20,000 towards supporting students entering the Italian Program at Chef School, within the George Brown College Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts. In 2023, seven scholarships, each worth \$2,500, were awarded to students who have demonstrated leadership qualities, a strong interest in their field of study and a passion for pursuing future academic and professional goals in relation to Italian culture and heritage. Through this gift, Villa Charities has supported the next generation of culinary talent and helped elevate their careers by giving them invaluable experiences in the nuance of Italian cuisine and culture. In the Spring 2023 semester, seven students had the opportunity to travel to Italy to gain real-life experience at some of the best hotels and restaurants in Italy.

On behalf of GBC Foundation and George Brown College, we thank you for making a difference for so many students.

About the Program

The Culinary Arts – Italian Program allows postgraduate students to elevate their careers by learning specialized Italian culinary skills and experiencing Italian culture from experts in Canada and Italy. Students experience the special connection between food and life in Italy, while acquiring the techniques that make the cuisine famous around the world.

The program allows students to:

- Experience hands-on learning in both Canada and Italy with pre-eminent Italian chef professors in the country.
- Build knowledge of Italian culinary traditions and embrace emerging trends in Italian cuisine.
- Benefit from our partnership with ALMA, the world-famous Scuola Internazionale di Cucina Italiana, near Parma, Italy, which is one of Italy's finest chef schools.
- Experience the vineyards, cheese producers and local markets of Italy as an open-air classroom.
- Study in some of the best restaurants and hotels in Italy, where students will receive attention, training, and an inspiring experience.
- As part of their residence, students offer their own special Italian-themed menus at the Chefs' House throughout the winter semester.

The Chef's House Residency

Building on the skills learned in their first two semester courses, in semester three, students of the Italian Culinary Arts program complete their annual residency at The Chef's House, George Brown College's training restaurant, where they offer their own special Italian-themed menus.

While at The Chef's House, students continue building their knowledge of Italian culinary traditions with our Italian chef professors, building on their learning acquired at Scuola Internazionale di Cucina Italiana, near Parma, Italy, one of Italy's finest chef schools. In Italy, students from George Brown College study and work in some of the country's best restaurants and hotels to receive further training and an inspiring experience.

2022-2023 Student Award Recipient Testimonial



Daniel Schiavone in the Kitchen at I Portici Hotel in Bologna, Italy

Daniel Schiavone

"The time I spent studying in Italy was incredible. I learned a lot about Italian cuisine, culture, and a little bit of the language. We first started off at ALMA for three weeks where we were prepped for our stages. Once out of ALMA, I went to the restaurant, I Portici Hotel, where I was working with the great staff there, enjoying every second of it and learning from colleagues eager to teach me what they know. I learned as much as I could from these great people, for example, making pasta, the butchery of certain meats, a bit of pastry, and how to perform in their kitchen. I am so grateful to have met all these amazing Italian chefs who welcomed me with open arms and made my experience so great!"

2022-2023 Student Award Recipient Testimonial



Darryl Shotlander (front, right) at Osteria Francescana, in Modena, Italy

Darryl Shotlander

"I had an amazing experience in Italy. I first studied at ALMA under some amazing chefs. I next went for my stage at Osteria Francescana which is rated as the best restaurant in Italy and "The World's Best of the Best." I got to learn from amazing chefs and under the guidance of Massimo Bottura and his Sous Chef Allen Huynh (alumni of GBC's H411 program). Working amongst people from all over the world I learned much about a lot of different cultures. It was truly a life changing experience that I will never forget, and I made many lifelong friends in Italy."

2022-2023 Student Award Recipient Testimonial



Gabriel Grammer (left) with classmates at ALMA in Parma, Italy

Gabriel Grammer

"I had such a great experience in Italy learning from a great team every day. We worked together, ate together and lived in the same house. Being in this restaurant has really helped me progress in many ways and having this scholarship helped immensely as well. I am grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of this."

2022-2023 Student Award Recipient Testimonial



Harshil Patel in the kitchen at Nostrano

Harshil Patel

"I had a wonderful learning experience in Italy. My studies at ALMA were incredible as I met some of the top chefs and learned from them. Then I went for my internship at the Michelin-starred Nostrano restaurant in the city of le Marche, where I worked and trained under Chef Stefano Ciotti, one of the top chefs in Italy. Working under Chef Ciotti and his team was undoubtedly one of my best experiences. The lessons I've learnt will be extremely helpful to me as I grow in my profession."

2022-2023 Student Award Recipient Testimonial



Mark Jonathan Rajarathnam at Enoteca Pinchiori, Firenze, Italy.

Mark Jonathan Rajarathnam

"The three weeks of time I spent studying in ALMA was very helpful for my career and very valuable to me. I learned many new things about Italian cuisine, culture, and wines. I also started to speak a little bit of Italian. The faculties in ALMA were extraordinary with amazing instructors. They were very passionate and precise while teaching us. I literally had the best time of my life. The work experience I had in ENOTECA PINCHIORI was like a dream come true moment. I personally learned a lot of new things. Not only in work ethics but also in handling mental pressure and working as a team in a fast-paced environment. It was very difficult but challenging. I am very grateful for this opportunity to learn many things from the amazing chef Monco Riccardo and his team."

2022-2023 Student Award Recipient Testimonial



Ömer Faruk Bayar making pizza at ALMA in Parma, Italy

Ömer Faruk Bayar

"I learned a lot about Italian cuisine and culture. My colleagues in Italy were so helpful and made the experience so enjoyable for me. They were so kind and shared Italian culture and cuisine. This international work experience will be very helpful in my future career. It was incredibly challenging, but the experience was unforgettable."

2022-2023 Student Award Recipient Testimonial



Peter Armstrong (right) in the kitchen at The Chef's House

Peter Armstrong

"My student experience in the Italian culinary world was a fascinating journey that has elevated my knowledge of the art of Italian cuisine. Their food and cooking style are extremely regional as well as seasonal.

I developed an in-depth understanding of, and appreciation for, the diversity between the twenty regions, and its cultural, historical, and geographical elements that affected their agriculture, wines, cuisine, and lives. As such, my journey brought me to the region of Piedmont, where I witnessed the beauty of the region, which produces the most prominent and best wines in Italy, and finally to a local Michelin restaurant. I learn specific culinary skills and techniques, in making various fine dishes including gnocchi, pasta, grissini, and cooking cream cheese sauces, risotto, and rabbits, using local and fresh ingredients. And, of course, I learn to make their famous Bagna Cauda dish. The unforgettable journey is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that has redefined the way I cook Italian dishes. Buon appetito!"