



Culinary Connections

Birmingham's place on the culinary map now seems assured. A host of restaurants in and around the city center boast a wide variety of delicious, varied, innovative dishes, and three Birmingham restaurants have earned Michelin stars.

We have been delighted to create links with two



Opus Restaurant, Birmingham

of the city's finest restaurants as well as the College of Food that helps supply them with talent.

Chef Michael Pivoney, then of the Signature Room at the Hancock Building and more recently of the Marion Street Cheese Market, joined a Sister Cities delegation to Birmingham in June, 2006.



John Penn

Highlights of his visit included a cookery presentation at House of Fraser (one of Birmingham's premier department stores), and a meal at Opus Restaurant which Michael helped prepare.

Opus was already linked with the Midwest: Its owner, Ann Tonks, is originally from St Louis. And we were pleased to renew our contacts with the restaurant two years later. In June 2008, as part of 'Celebrate Birmingham'—discussed in a previous newsletter - two chefs from Birmingham joined us for a week in Chicago: David Colcombe, Chef Director of Opus, and Luke Tipping, Executive Chef at Simpsons. In a packed week, they sampled Chicago's finest restaurants, spoke to students at Kendall College, conducted a group of journalists in a cookery class, and designed a course each at the closing dinner at the Signature Room together with Executive Chef Patrick Sheerin.

Last but by no means least, in September 2008 John Penn, the Assistant Dean at the College of Food, University College Birmingham, came to Chicago for the inaugural Chicago Gourmet culinary festival. Amongst

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other events, he worked with Michael Pivoney, and Ciaran Gantley from the Galway Bay Hotel, to prepare a meal at the Marion Street Cheese Market as part of a “Sister Cities Dine Around” evening. ●



Luke Tipping, Patrick Sheerin, David Colcombe



Signature Room



May 7, 2009

A well-attended performance and lecture looked at how Shaw fashioned a new kind of theater out of the conventions of Victorian melodrama. Event chair Alex Saunders organized a fascinating evening in the Claudia Cassidy Theater at the Cultural Center.

Attended by an audience of almost 200, the evening featured two related events. First, ShawChicago performed scenes from George Bernard Shaw's early



play 'Widowers' Houses.' Following the performance, Professor Joel Kaplan lectured on the distinction between Shaw's avuncular reputation after his death and his iconoclastic life and views, and how he fashioned a new kind of theater out of the conventions of Victorian melodrama.

Professor Joel Kaplan is a freelance writer and theatre historian based in Birmingham, U.K. and Florence, Italy. From 1995 to 2003 he served as Director of the University of Birmingham's Postgraduate Centre for the Study of Drama, and Chair of the University's Department of Drama and Theatre Arts.

The event was made possible thanks to a generous donation by British Airways. ●

Birmingham City University - Real Estate Trip

March 2009

A group of Real Estate students from Birmingham City University, led by course leader Chris Conway and assisted by Sister Cities Senior Manager of International Programs Dayna Chazan, explored a variety of buildings in the city, with some 'behind the scenes' tours and an opportunity to make a presentation to a real client.

The objective of the trip was to give the students exposure to international buildings to bring out their skills in determining clear valuation costs, promoting overseas valuation and the way it is undertaken in other climates. The students were able to present their findings to a real client, obtaining vital 'real world' experience so often missing in teaching, and benefit from the feedback given by the panel of judges.

Site visits included the following, with highlights of the insights gained at each:

- City Hall - Urban Design and Planning, with an insight into the planning framework and recognition of funding opportunities and the uses of TIF schemes and Landmark Status.
- 311 South Wacker, including a behind the scenes insight into HVAC and security in high-rise buildings.
- Department of Buildings - Commissioner Richard Monocchio dealt with Building codes, ADA, Fire etc.
- IRR / Cohen – Property Appraisal and Mortgage Brokering
- The Centre for Green Technology – Building sustainability into your project. ●



Chicago - Birmingham Committee Contacts:

Chair—Rupert Ward, rupertward@kpmg.com

International Programs Managers—Ieva Dilyte, ieva.dilyte@cityofchicago.org