



September 2021

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Anna Cummins

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### Recommended Citation

Cummins, Anna (2021) "Tour De France 環法之旅," *AMBROSIA 客道 : The Magazine of The International Culinary Institute*: , 30-39.

Available at: <https://repository.vtc.edu.hk/ive-hosts-ambrosia/vol10/iss1/15>

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Despite being a relatively small nation, France has had a colossal impact on the culinary world. We explore the history and development of French cuisine and its contribution to global gastronomic culture. 論面積，法國不算大，但這個歐洲國家在餐飲界的影響卻舉足輕重，本文特此探討法國菜的歷史和發展及其對全球美食文化的貢獻。 **By Anna Cummins**



# Tour de France 環法之旅



*This page: Antique illustration of an elegant French dinner in the 18th century, by Louis-Joseph Masquelier*

*Opposite page: A dish of Loire Valley white asparagus at French restaurant Odette in Singapore*

本頁：18世紀一場隆重的法國晚宴在Louis-Joseph Masquelier筆下躍然紙上

對頁：新加坡法國餐廳Odette一道以盧瓦爾河谷的白蘆筍烹調的菜式

French may be known as the language of love, but it is more demonstrably the language of eating out. From “restaurant” and “café” to “menu”, “cuisine”, “maître d’”, “aperitif”, “beverage”, “à la carte”, and “bon appétit”, words taken from French permeate the Western dining experience.

Popular legend has it that a soup vendor named Monsieur Boulanger opened the first public dining room in Paris in 1765, serving bowls of bouillon to hungry patrons. The sign that hung above Boulanger’s door was said to advertise his nourishing broth as restoratives, or restaurants. The concept started a culinary revolution in Paris, with slow-simmered soups appealing to the wealthy merchant class who had a taste for refined and health-giving foods.

It wasn’t long before the city’s restaurateurs added more complex dishes and wines to their menus, with elevated surroundings becoming part of the experience. Towards the end of the 18th century, the first of the grand Parisian restaurants began to welcome patrons, offering varied menus and a considered ambience. La Grande Taverne de Londres, a prominent luxury restaurant opened by Antoine Beauvilliers in 1782, is credited with being “the first Parisian restaurant worthy of the name” by culinary encyclopedia Larousse Gastronomique.

It’s not just the restaurant model that the French can lay claim to. While other Western countries at the time had a preference for bringing all courses out simultaneously, France developed and popularised the practice of serving multiple courses eaten in a specific order – starting small, moving to an entrée and ending on a sweet note or liqueurs, with one course brought to the table at a time.

In the 20th century, the popularity and quality of countryside dining soared after the invention of the car made it easier for people to travel. This trend led to a cohort of exceptional provincial restaurants outside Paris, such as the Paul Bocuse Restaurant near Lyon, La Pyramide in Vienne, and Mirazur on the French Riviera, currently ranked number one on the World’s 50 Best Restaurants list.

Food has evolved to become a part of the French national identity to such an extent that, in 2010, Unesco added the “gastronomic meal of the French” to its list of intangible cultural heritage. “I believe excellence, authenticity and pleasure are the core values of French cuisine,” says Alexandre Giorgini, Consul General of France in Hong Kong and Macau. “The use of fresh products with complementary flavours by creative chefs, a careful selection of dishes that reflect the variety of the French terroirs, along with refined wine pairings and a beautiful table setting, are some of the main characteristics of our culinary culture. Gastronomy is a cornerstone of our way of life and enjoying a good meal is part of everyday life.”



As French-born Olivier Elzer, executive chef of the two-Michelin-starred L’Envol restaurant at St. Regis Hong Kong, puts it: “Food is more than feeding a hungry stomach – the company that you are with and the food that you enjoy means happiness. [It is] what we call joie de vivre.”

Chef Tiffany Lo, Hong Kong-born alumna of the legendary Pierre Koffmann and founder of independent French bistro Jean May in Wan Chai, agrees. “French cuisine is deeply rooted in tradition, and each region has its distinctive styles and cooking traditions,” she says. “The French’s deep love for food and wine is pretty much unparalleled, almost like a ritual.”

Today, most French restaurants come within three categories: informal bistros and brasseries serving comforting classics, mid-priced restaurants and grand restaurants presenting complex dishes in elegant surroundings.



Gastronomy is a cornerstone of our way of life and enjoying a good meal is part of everyday life

美饌佳餚是我們生活方式的基石，享用美食是我們日常生活的一部分



— Alexandre Giorgini

對許多人而言，法語可能是談情說愛的語言，但法語在許多人眼中更是餐飲的語言，由restaurant（餐廳）和café（咖啡店）到menu（餐牌）、cuisine（菜式）、maître d（侍應領班）、aperitif（開胃酒）、beverage（飲品）、à la carte（單點），以至吃飯前說一句bon appétit（開懷地吃吧）等吃西餐時常用的辭彙，均源自法語。

據說，西方第一間餐廳是由賣湯的小攤販Boulangier先生於1765年在巴黎開辦，為飢餓的顧客供應清湯裹腹。餐廳門頂上掛著的招牌除了標榜其營養豐富的清湯為健康美食外，還寫著restaurant一字，意指店內有食物供應。這間餐廳的概念在巴黎引發了一場餐飲革命，慢煨細燉的清湯吸引了講求精緻飲食和追求健康食品的富裕商人階層。

當地的餐飲業者迅速地在餐牌上加入更多複雜的菜式和美酒，用餐環境也大大提升。到18世紀末，第一批高級法國餐廳開始營業，在精心打造的環境下，為客人提供多樣化的菜式。La Grande Taverne de Londres是Antoine Beauvilliers於1782年開辦的知名奢華餐廳，獲美食百科辭典《Larousse Gastronomique》譽為「巴黎第一間名副其實的頂級餐廳」。

法國人不僅奠定了餐廳的模式，當其他西方國家的食肆還將客人點的菜式不分先後地一股腦兒端上餐桌時，法國已發展出並普及化特定的用餐次序，由小食開始到主菜和最後的甜品或餐酒等，一道道佳餚美酒逐一呈上，餐桌上同一時間裡只會有一道菜式。

20世紀隨著汽車的出現，出行變得方便，郊區餐廳乘時而起，餐廳品質也在提升。在這股潮流下，巴黎市郊湧現了許多優質餐廳，如鄰近里昂的Paul Bocuse Restaurant、維埃納的La Pyramide，以及位於蔚藍海岸、目前高踞全球50最佳餐廳榜榜首的Mirazur。

美食已經成法國的身份象徵之一，聯合國教科文組織甚至於2010年將「法國美食大餐」列入其非物質文化遺產名錄。法國駐香港及澳門總領事官遠明說：「我認為法國菜的精髓可以用優質、正宗和能讓用餐者感到愉快滿足來概括。創意不凡的廚師善用味道互補的新鮮食材、因法國多樣化的地理氣候環境而衍生的各式精緻佳餚、頂級佐餐美酒，以至漂亮的餐桌佈置等，都是我們飲食文化裡的主要特色。美饌佳餚是我們生活方式的基石，享用美食是我們日常生活的一部分。」

生於法國的Olivier Elzer是香港瑞吉酒店米芝蓮二星餐廳L'Envol的行政總廚，他指出：「食物不僅僅是為了填飽肚子，一起用膳的夥伴和享用的食物都是快樂的來源，我們稱之為joie-de-vivre（生活之樂）。」

*This page, from top: Archive image of a restaurant in the French city of Lyon; independent French bistro Jean May in Wan Chai*

*Opposite page: A dish of green beans, cherries and pistachio at World's Best Restaurant Mirazur*

本頁上至下：法國里昂一家餐廳的舊照片；位於灣仔的法式小餐館Jean May

對頁：全球最佳餐廳Mirazur以青豆、車厘子和開心果炮製的美食



## Cummins: Tour De France ????

The real essence of French food lies in the variety of regional styles, ingredients and flavours that together make up this storied cuisine. “France is divided into different terroirs; each terroir is like a country on its own, with different known produce and signature dishes,” explains Elzer. “For example, I come from Alsace, we are known for our river fish, farm cows and cabbages. And Brittany – given how it extends out towards the Atlantic Ocean – is best known for fresh seafood.”

“There is a huge portfolio of cuisine and dishes in the different terroirs. Each region has its own flavour profile, wines and ingredients, and it is this diverse profile that gives France a diverse cuisine and knowledge base,” he says.

At L’Envol, Chef Elzer prepares an inventive interpretation of French haute cuisine, incorporating ingredients from France and Asia. Elzer, who was mentored by the late Joël Robuchon, started his career at the Abbaye de la Bussière in Burgundy, France. He was named one of the country’s 22 best young chefs by the French guide *Gault Millau*.

The diversity across the provinces results in a lot of classic recipes French chefs can use. While traditional French

cuisine is known for its richness – heavy in sauces and always delicious, thanks to liberal uses of herbs and butter, Elzer highlights that many in the new guard prefer a less saturated touch. “There is a slight turning point from tradition. Many chefs, including myself, are now focusing on seasonal ingredients to make lighter versions of the classics,” he says.

There are 13 administrative regions within France and a further five located overseas. The cuisine of each region is integral to its character. So much so that the appellation d’origine contrôlée (AOC) certification is awarded to terroirs in France to give geographical protection to their wines, cheeses, butters and agricultural produce, and ensure they are made to the highest standards. Well-known AOC products include lentils from Le Puy-en-Velay, Roquefort cheese, chicken from Bresse, and spirits such as Cognac and Armagnac.

The region surrounding Paris is known as Île-de-France and has numerous specialities, from creamy Brie de Meaux to croque-monsieur sandwiches. As an agricultural region, Île-de-France produces plenty of meats and is known for the Houdan chicken, an old French breed that is prized for juicy, white meat and quality eggs.



☞ There is a slight turning point from tradition. Many chefs, including myself, are now focusing on seasonal ingredients to make lighter versions of the classics

當代法國菜已稍稍偏離傳統，現時許多廚師，包括我自己，都喜歡使用應季食材，讓菜式變得清淡一點 ☞

– Olivier Elzer

香港廚師Tiffany Lo曾師從傳奇大廚Pierre Koffmann，也是灣仔法式小餐館Jean May的老闆，她同意道：「法國菜深深地植根傳統，每個地區都有獨特的風格和烹調傳統。法國人對美酒佳餚的熱愛可說是舉世無雙，幾乎像對待儀式一樣虔誠。」

現時，法國餐廳主要分為三大類：供應傳統菜式的悠閒小餐館、中價餐廳，以及環境高雅、菜式繁複的高級餐廳。

法國美食享譽世界，變化豐富的地區風格、食材和味道均是其構成要素。Elzer解釋：「法國擁有多個不同的地理環境，每個的農產和招牌菜式都涇渭分明。舉例說，我的故鄉阿爾薩斯區以河魚、飼養牛和椰菜聞名，而海岸線向大西洋延伸的布列塔尼則以新鮮海產馳名。」

他續道：「不同地理環境的烹調風格和菜式迥異不同，變化多端，每區都有自己的味道風格、葡萄酒和食材，多樣化的面貌使法國擁有豐富多元的菜式和知識基礎。」

在L'Envol，大廚Elzer善用法國和亞洲食材，為客人炮製創意十足的高級法國菜式。Elzer在法國勃根地的Abbaye de la Bussière餐廳展開其廚師生涯，曾跟隨已故的Joël Robuchon習藝，獲法國餐廳指南《Gault Millau》選為該國22位最優秀的年輕廚師之一。

省份之間的多樣化為法國廚師們提供大量可供參考的經典食譜。傳統法國菜大量使用香草和牛油，因此以濃郁而惹味的醬汁聞名，但Elzer強調新一代的廚師許多都偏向比較清淡的口味。他說：「當代法國菜已稍稍偏離傳統，現時許多廚師，包括我自己，都喜歡使用應季食材，讓菜式變得清淡一點。」

法國國內有13個行政區，海外也有五個，每區的菜式都各有特色，為此更設有原產地命名控制（AOC）標籤，為不同地區出產的葡萄酒、芝士、牛油及農產提供地理保障，確保產品的品質。著名的AOC產品包括有勒皮小扁豆、羅克福芝士、布雷斯雞，以至干邑和愛文邑等佳釀。

圍繞巴黎的大區名為法蘭西島大區，擁有許多特色美食，如香滑的莫城布里芝士和法式烤芝士火腿三文治等。農業發達的法蘭西島大區出產多種肉類，如聞名的Houdan雞——法國古老雞種，以肉汁豐沛的白肉聞名，雞蛋品質尤佳。

大東部大區，由阿爾薩斯、香檳-阿登和洛林區組成，以出產汽泡酒聞名全球。當中，洛林區也以法國鹹批和蘋果撻著稱。阿爾薩斯則深受德國影響，德國酸菜和啤酒在當地大行其道。

普羅旺斯-阿爾卑斯-蔚藍海岸大區是法國最大的蔬果產區，各種各樣的新鮮香草，加上用鯉魚和蒜頭炮製的特色醬汁，使這個大區



This page: Olivier Elzer of L'Envol at St. Regis Hong Kong

Opposite page, from left: L'Oursin D'Hokkaido (Hokkaido sea urchin, gamberoni prawn and crunchy fennel) at L'Envol; Roquefort cheese

本頁：香港瑞吉酒店L'Envol餐廳的總廚Olivier Elzer  
對頁左至右：L'Envol由北海道海膽、大蝦和茴香烹調的招牌菜L'Oursin D'Hokkaido；羅克福芝士

Grand Est, also called Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne-Lorraine, is a region of France revered globally for its sparkling wine. Lorraine is famous for its namesake quiche and apple tarts, while Alsace enjoys a German influence, resulting in the local popularity of sauerkraut and German-style beers.

Known for being the largest producer of fruits and vegetables in France, the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region plays a vital role in French cooking thanks to its array of fresh herbs and speciality sauces flavoured with anchovies and garlic. Seafood is abundant in this coastal region, and the area is also prized for its world-class honey and olive oil.

Other regional highlights include the wines, smoked meats, snails and Dijon mustard produced in Burgundy and Franche-Comté; and the oysters, mussels and cattle breeding of Nouvelle-Aquitaine – an area said to make the best butter for pastries.

“I believe the essence of French cuisine is the nation’s view of food and wine from its raw state – from the sowing of the seeds to breeding and raising cattle for milk, cheeses and meat,” says Lo, who has also worked alongside chefs including Michel Roux Jr. and Éric Chavot. “They have genuine love, appreciation, patience and respect for what their terroir gives them.”

The historical architects of modern French cooking were the great 19th-century chefs Antonin Carême, known for meticulous presentation that codified the haute cuisine movement, and Auguste Escoffier, who based much of his technique on Carême’s and rose to become director of kitchens at the Savoy Hotel.

Escoffier streamlined the hierarchy of professional kitchens and demanded a superlative level of cleanliness and discipline from his chefs. Today, his organisational structure is still used in kitchens, from the lowest-ranking commis chefs to the kitchen manager or chef de cuisine. Escoffier also modernised Carême’s elaborate style – reducing elaborate garnishes and promoting the use of seasonal ingredients.

The 1960s in France were marked by the arrival of nouvelle cuisine, pioneered by chefs who sought to push back against the complexity and rigidity of haute cuisine. Nouvelle cuisine emphasised minimalism, fresh ingredients and natural flavours. It was led by chefs such as Paul Bocuse (the “pope” of French cuisine, who essentially created the idea of the celebrity chef), Pierre Troisgros, Alain Chapel and Michel Guérard.

By the 1980s, however, many felt the style had been exhausted and again explored the classical ways of haute cuisine – albeit retaining a lighter touch. The perceived



The French have genuine love, appreciation, patience and respect for what their terroir gives them  
法國人是真的熱愛、感激及尊敬大地的產物，會耐心等待，不會揠苗助長



– Tiffany Lo

THIS PAGE, TOP: COURTESY OF WORLD'S 50 BEST RESTAURANTS, OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP: COURTESY OF JEAN MAY



This page, from top: A dish created by Tiffany Lo for Jean May; the "pope" of French cuisine, the late Paul Bocuse

Opposite page, from top: Mirazur's version of traditional French dish lièvre à la royale; Limousin cattle in Nouvelle-Aquitaine

本頁上至下: Tiffany Lo為Jean May創作的菜式; 有法國菜教皇之譽、已故的Paul Bocuse

對頁上至下: Mirazur版的傳統法國菜式酒燜兔肉; 新阿基坦大區的利木贊牛



在法國菜中扮演了重要的角色。當地沿海地區亦盛產海鮮，並以頂級的蜜糖和橄欖油聞名。

此外，勃根地和法蘭琪-康堤大區以葡萄酒、燻肉、蝸牛和第戎芥末等馳名。新阿基坦大區則以生蠔、青口、牛隻繁殖見稱，據說此區出產的牛油最適合用來做糕點。

曾與Michel Roux Jr.和Éric Chavot等名廚合作的Lo稱：「我覺得法國菜的精髓在於他們從基礎開始注重食物和酒的態度，由播種到繁殖和飼養牛隻（不管是生產牛奶和芝士的奶牛還是食用牛），均備受重視。他們是真的熱愛、感激及尊敬大地的產物，會耐心等待，不會揠苗助長。」

19世紀名廚Antonin Carême和Auguste Escoffier是奠定現代法式烹調風格的兩大功臣，前者以巨細無遺的整理將高級法國菜規範化，後者位居Savoy Hotel的廚房總監，許多烹調技巧都師承於Carême。

Escoffier精簡了餐廳廚房的等級制度和流程，對廚房的整潔和廚師的紀律提出嚴格要求。今天，餐廳的廚房仍然遵循他有系統的結構，由最低級別的助理廚師到廚房經理或菜式主廚，井井有條。Escoffier亦簡化了Carême繁複精細的風格，減少裝飾用的配菜，並提倡使用應季食材。

法國於1960年代迎來新派法國菜，有相同理念的先驅廚師旨在打破高級料理的繁複和僵化。新烹調方式由Paul Bocuse（奠定名廚概念的人，有法國菜教皇之稱）、Pierre Troisgros、Alain Chapel和Michel Guérard等廚師帶領，強調簡約主義、新鮮食材和天然調味。

到了1980年代，許多廚師覺得這種風格已開到荼蘼，又重新開始探索高級料理的傳統烹調方法，但味道傾向清淡這點維持不變。高級法國大餐刻意的繁文縟節和拘泥形式一直在餐飲業界苟存到1990年代，當中一小部分甚至模仿得滑稽又拙劣。法國菜的身份危機也在此時漸漸滋生，加上急速增長的薪金和增值稅等致命重擊導致餐廳經營困難重重，更讓法國餐飲業雪上加霜。

fussiness and formality of fine French dining dogged the industry into the 1990s, with small portions becoming a source of parody. A crisis of identity was brewing – compounded by the impossible battle of restaurant economics, with rocketing wages and sky-high VAT taking ravenous bites from the bottom line.

Robuchon – crowned Chef of the Century by guide *Gault Millau* in 1989 – retired from cheffing in 1995, aged 50, after seeing peers suffer intense stress and even heart attacks. However, he returned from hiatus in 2003 with L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon, which opened first in Paris and then in locations around the world, including Tokyo and Hong Kong.

Robuchon's eclectic French fine dining was served tapas-style from an open kitchen, surrounded by a dimly lit, intimate Japanese-style dining bar. It may have ruffled industry feathers but was a resounding success – Robuchon, who passed away in 2018 at age 73, is the most influential chef of the post-nouvelle movement, which welcomed influences from other global cuisines. He still holds the world record of 32 Michelin stars.

While there will always be a place for starched linens and dignified service, the trend for modern French dining has opened a new world of experimentation in the recent decade. "Coming to Asia and learning from my mentors, part of the evolution is also the discovery of ingredients," says Elzer. "One of my signature dishes at L'Envol is Grilled Tuna with Five Spices, Crushed Avocado and Crispy Shallots – a dish I created when I was in Burgundy many years ago. The shallot dressing uses over 30 ingredients to create spices that are only known in Asia."

Indeed, French cuisine is nothing if not continually evolving. "As much as our culinary traditions are inspiring chefs around the world, foreign influences also contribute to the dynamism of French gastronomy," says consul general Giorgini.

He adds, "Food is a universal language that brings people together and it's a wonderful way to promote our country across the world. In Hong Kong, for instance, we are proud to see the French culinary culture making significant contributions to the city's vibrant gastronomic scene."

Elzer highlights the evolution of French cuisine is currently moving towards a lighter, fresher approach that makes dishes more accessible to guests. But, he notes, forward-looking contemporary French cuisine will never bid "au revoir" to the classics. "It's still important to create a sense of nostalgia in the discovery of deliciousness. We say: 'À la recherche du temps perdu'. In search of things past." 🍷



*This page: Le Caviar Imperial, one of Joël Robuchon's signature dishes, features a base of king crab meat topped with Impérial caviar and a sprinkling of gold leaf, and surrounded by a crustacean jelly with dots of cauliflower cream*

*Opposite page: The late Joël Robuchon inside L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon*

本頁：Joël Robuchon的招牌菜之一Le Caviar Imperial——在由甲殼海產做的啫喱上逐層放上皇帝蟹肉、Impérial魚子醬、閃亮的金箔，周圍點綴著椰菜花忌廉

對頁：已故的Joël Robuchon在L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon餐廳裡留影



LEFT AND RIGHT: COURTESY OF L'ATELIER DE JOËL ROBUCHON HONG KONG

1989年獲美食指南《Gault Millau》封為「世紀大廚」的Robuchon眼見同行承受巨大壓力，有人甚至心臟病發，因而毅然於1995年50之齡宣布引退。幸而，他在2003年捲土重來，在巴黎開辦首間L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon餐廳，其後更擴張到世界多個城市，包括東京和香港。

Robuchon不拘一格的高級法國餐廳設開放式廚房和溫馨的日式餐吧，燈光柔和，供應類似西班牙小食的餐點。這間餐廳在業界的褒貶不一，但經營卻絕對成功。Robuchon已於2018年辭世，享年73歲，是後新烹調運動中影響最深遠的法國廚師之一，一共擁有32顆米芝蓮星的世界紀錄。

雖然桌布燙得平滑無綫、服務一絲不苟的餐廳從來不乏市場，但過去十年，現代法式餐飲開啟了新的體驗領域，促使大家積極作出嘗試。Elzer稱：「我在亞洲這裡及從多位導師身上學到，發掘食材也是演變的其中一部分。L'Envol餐廳的招牌菜式五香吞拿魚配牛油果醬及脆紅蔥，是我多年前在勃根地工作時創作的，但菜式現時的紅蔥醬則由30多種材料來製成亞洲獨有的調味料。」

事實上，法國料理如果固步自封就不會有今天的成就，領事官遠明解釋：「我們的烹調傳統啟發了世界各地的廚師，而同時，外國的影響也成為法式美食的推動力。」

他續道：「美食是世界語言，可以將人聯繫起來，亦是向世界各地推廣我們國家的好辦法。以香港為例，我們看見法式餐飲文化能為多姿多采的本地餐飲業添柴加薪而感到自豪。」

Elzer強調法國菜朝著更清淡和清新的方向發展，更容易為客人接受。不過展望未來，他認為當代法國菜永遠不會跟傳統說再見。「在發掘味道之餘，帶出懷舊情懷也一樣重要。法語裡有句俗語說：追憶似水年華。」🍷



## Classic Never Dies 經典不死

Whether a chef aspires to work in an historic French bistro in Paris or a modern European restaurant in Hong Kong, an understanding of and experience in classic cuisine and culture is paramount. The ICI's Higher Diploma in Classic Western Cuisine prepares students for a long and successful career in the catering industry through a focus on developing intellectual competency and enhancing technical skills through hands-on learning.

The two-year programme consists of a wide range of professional modules, including fundamentals in cooking, sustainable gastronomy, modern cold preparations, artisan bread, Nouvelle French cuisine and Northern European cuisine. Not only will students become well versed in classic Western cuisine and fine-dining-focused techniques but they will also master classic French culinary techniques and be able to adapt them worldwide. Because the recipe for culinary success does not lie in the ingredients themselves but how well they are prepared.

不管是在巴黎的傳統法式小餐館還是在香港的現代歐陸餐廳工作，對經典菜式及文化有認識及經驗尤其重要。國際廚藝學院的經典西式廚藝高級文憑課程透過實踐學習，集中培訓學員的智能和專業技巧，助他們在餐飲業大展鴻圖。

課程為期兩年，涵蓋多個專業單元，包括烹調基礎、持續發展美食學、現代冷菜食品製作、歐陸工匠麵包、新派法式廚藝和北歐廚藝等。學員不僅可以掌握經典西方菜式和高級料理的烹調技巧，並能夠將法國菜的烹調技巧與世界各地菜系融匯貫通。要在廚藝界裡創一番事業，光有優良的自身條件還不足夠，事前的培訓也不能忽視。