

Henry Wadsworth Royal Academy of Culinary Arts Young Chef of the Year 2017 Savoy Educational Trust L.A. Trip 2018

Taking part in and winning the Annual Awards of Excellence Young Chef of Year has to be the hardest but most rewarding thing that I have done in my career so far. It really pushed me out of my comfort zone and I learnt a lot about creating dishes, planning menus and organising myself with all the practice I put in before and during the competition. But I really believe all the hard work was worth it with the amazing prizes and opportunities that have come from taking part.

I have to start by thanking the RACA and The Savoy Educational Trust for this amazing Educational Trip, it was a great achievement to win Young Chef of the Year and an amazing surprise to find out I had won a trip to California.

My start to the trip was actually quite stressful for me as I missed my flight due to a road accident on the way to the airport so, unfortunately, I travelled on my own. It was a great relief to arrive at The Beverly Hills Hotel and immediately be welcomed into this amazing location; I was amazed by the luxury of the lobby and my incredible room. I then met up with Elena, Lewis and Adam a bit later than expected, in the hotel's iconic restaurant The Polo Lounge. It was a great way to meet everyone and we shared a great meal before an early night, as we were all very tired.



Our first day together was spent as a sort of induction of the two hotels we would be staying at- Beverly Hills and Bell air. We were given a tour of the Beverly Hills Hotel by Steven Boggs the director of guest relations he taught us a lot about the history of the hotel, and how it had come to have such an iconic image in L.A. He showed us some of the most Luxurious rooms I had ever seen. We learnt an incredible amount about the style of service delivery and the standards that the guests expect at the hotel.

As part of the tour we were shown around the housekeeping areas, learning about style and décor and the importance of customer service. Here we were given our uniforms for the week.

The afternoon was spent at the Hotel Bel-Air we were shown around the hotel by Micah Paloff the director of restaurants. The hotel was very different to Beverly Hills, a bit more secluded in location and the style was more modern. It is a perfect place for the rich and famous to escape the public eye and relax in luxury. We had a great lunch at Bel-Air where we were introduced to Wolfgang Pucks iconic Californian style of food, really championing the best of local produce and fusion of different cultures. But it didn't end there, later in the evening, we headed to Wolfgang Pucks Flagship restaurant Spago. Again I was amazed by the food, we had seven great courses and a really good waiter that took the time to explain the wine and history of the restaurant and dishes. This was a fantastic learning experience which we could not have experienced in London . We all felt that we had achieved so much.

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We stayed at the Beverly Hills Hotel for the next five days doing amazing activities each day; we spent a day volunteering at the homeless mission in downtown L.A. This was a really humbling experience and a stark contrast from the luxury of the hotel only a few miles away. We spent a few days working in the hotel itself in our respective departments. I learnt so much about how a kitchen in a hotel this size worked. It was a complex operation with banquet kitchens, room service kitchens and a service area for The Polo Lounge. Everyone was very friendly and welcoming I really enjoyed talking to the chefs and learn about working in the U.S.A. as it was very different from what I am used to. This will remain with me for the rest of my life.

On day six we got up early to go to the Hollywood farmers market. We met with a few chefs from the hotel and spent a few hours exploring. It was a big market set up twice a week for local farmers to sell their produce. I was quite surprised to see the number of quality ingredients that we did such as fruit, vegetables, fruit juices, sauces, dried fruit, coffee, free-range poultry and eggs, meats, cheeses and wines. America has a bad stereotype of unhealthy food, but my experience here was the opposite with stall after stall of amazing local sustainable produce.

The next day we said goodbye to The Hotel Beverly Hills and moved to The Hotel Bel-Air, It was sad to leave but we were just as excited to stay at the Bel-Air as we had seen how amazing it was earlier in the week. I was shown to a very modern room with, to my amazement a private garden.

That evening we had a very memorable meal at Nobu in Malibu, the setting was right on the beach with views of the sea and the food was Japanese. We asked the waiter to order for us as we were a bit overwhelmed by the menu, it was incredible. Course after course of amazing fresh seafood whilst the sunset over the sea. The waiter advised us to drink sake with the meal (which I had never tried), but it was really nice.



After a late start the next morning we spent the afternoon working at The Hotel Bel-Air's restaurant. On that day a special guest chef event was taking place with 2 Michelin starred chef Jean Francis-Pierre, L.A. chef Walter Manzke and of course Wolfgang Puck himself. I felt very lucky to be there and work alongside all these great chefs. I was welcomed into the team and took part in the service that evening. I was so happy to work with these great chefs and felt very inspired by their food and stories. It was very interesting to see the styles of food alongside each other, a collaboration of three styles in



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one menu.

Our last few days were packed with great tourist attractions around L.A. We visited Runyon Canyon and hiked to the top to see great views across L.A., Santa Monica Pier, Griffith Observatory, Eataly (a modern Italian food store), Disneyland and dinners at two great L.A. restaurants Providence and Osteria Mozza.

This trip truly amazed me; it was a once in a lifetime experience I will never forget. We met some incredible people during the trip that were so passionate about their jobs and happy to teach us about it. We were welcomed and treated like V.I.P's, something I have never experienced and not sure I ever will again.

I feel very lucky to move on in my career with a greater understanding of the industry and hospitality at the top level. I have to thank the Savoy Educational Trust and the Dorchester Collection for providing this fantastic prize which gave us all such a wonderful practical learning experience where we gained such new valuable useful knowledge all of which we can use in our careers.

