

## pastry chef(s) profile



### Kim Collishaw & Eve Lacabanne Culinary Capers Catering

Culinary Capers Catering in Vancouver has become an industry leader and mentor to many thanks to a combination of open leadership by President and CEO Debra Lykkemark and innovative catering ideas. It continues to lead the way into new markets with the opening of Culinary Capers Beijing and Culinary Cakes.

These new entities have enjoyed the same type of success that has marked their parent company. In April, Culinary Capers Beijing catered on the Great Wall (see story on page 3) and in 2007, Eve Lacabanne, the company's cake designer, was named Wedding Cake Designer of the Year by the Canadian Wedding Industry Awards and she won the ICA CATIE Award in 2008 for the Best Cake Design.

Lacabanne, together with the company's pastry chef, Kim Collishaw, wields some serious flour power. While Collishaw strives to create inspired desserts that complement Culinary Capers' distinctive cuisine, Lacabanne turns her theatrical eye as a former dancer to the artistry of cake design. The two talked to ICA about sugar, spice and everything nice.

#### **ICA: What brought you to where you are now?**

**Lacabanne:** I initially was recommended to Culinary Capers for the pastry chef position, but I wanted to do cakes and I suggested that if they wanted to further develop their cake department, I would be very interested. They

took me up on it and the Culinary Cakes division was created.

**Collishaw:** I started catering as a work experience program through culinary school, worked hard to prove myself and kept moving up in the ranks.

#### **ICA: What attracted you to become a pastry chef?**

**Lacabanne:** After retiring from dance, I knew I wanted to continue in a creative direction for my work life. I had always been drawn to the baking, cooking and design books and magazines, so I took a chance and went to pastry and baking school. Once in the field I knew it was all about the cakes!

**Collishaw:** I always had a love for baking and beautiful desserts. I was the person to ask to bring desserts to a party or potluck. I was always asked to make cakes for special occasions. When the company I worked for offered me a buy-out, within 24 hours I decided to take it and signed up for culinary school.

#### **ICA: What have been the biggest challenges you have faced?**

**Lacabanne:** As a cake designer, I think the biggest challenge is coordinating with the event as a whole. That and budgets and transportation.

**Collishaw:** Making sure the desserts will hold up during delivery. Packing up beautiful desserts so they get to the event the same way they left our kitchen can be a challenge, usually more challenging than making them. And, of course, trying to stay abreast of the current trends and what the top restaurants and chefs are doing.

#### **ICA: What was the most complicated dessert you've had to prepare for an event?**

**Lacabanne:** This is a difficult question as every specialty cake comes with its own challenges. Even when you think you've thought of everything, something unexpected pops up! There is a lot of problem solving when constructing a big cake. The most difficult problem is structural stability. I had one cake that went up Grouse Mountain on a gondola!

**Collishaw:** Any large event has its challenges. I tend to bite off more than I can chew for these large events because we really want to wow them. But we always pull it off.

#### **ICA: What catering war story do you remember with a smile?**

**Lacabanne:** All I will say is that it was a very busy wedding weekend, it was very late and I could not mix the color orange. It seems so simple now but...

**Collishaw:** Sitting in the fridge with three of my pastry cooks “swirling” champagne gelée with gold leaf in 700 shot glasses so the gold leaf would “suspend” and wouldn’t sink.

**ICA: Who is someone you admire as a pastry chef?**

**Lacabanne:** There are so many wonderful cake designers but if I have to pick one it would be Thomas Haas ([www.thomashaas.com](http://www.thomashaas.com)). He sets a standard for us all not just in cake designing but as a top pastry chef here in Vancouver.

**Collishaw:** I love Pastry Chef Johnny Iuzzinni’s ([www.johnnyiuzzinni.com](http://www.johnnyiuzzinni.com)) style. He does gorgeous desserts and pushes the boundaries with flavors and texture. He uses unusual ingredients but they always seem to work.

**ICA: Where do you find inspiration?**

**Lacabanne:** From other cake designers and co-workers. From design magazines, nature, textiles. It’s all valuable information that can be applied to a cake. I am also taking Fine Arts at a local art college in Vancouver.

**ICA: What is your favorite kitchen gadget and why?**

**Lacabanne:** My offset palette knife. I can’t decorate a wedding cake without it!

**Collishaw:** I couldn’t live without my mixer. It makes life so easy. I also love a sauce gun. It cuts down on labor and time.

**ICA: What is a unique food item that you have recently begun using?**

**Collishaw:** Elderflower syrup. It instantly brings out the flavor in strawberry and is great in drinks.

**ICA: What do you think some of the major differences are between being a pastry chef and a catering firm and being a pastry chef at a restaurant? Do you think one is more challenging than the other and if so, why?**

**Lacabanne:** As a cake designer in a catering company, I have to coordinate with a lot of departments when doing a large event like a wedding.

**Collishaw:** There are so many differences. We have literally hundreds of recipes in our data base and everyday is different. We also do an insane amount of petite desserts. The volume is just so much higher than it is in a restaurant. We also have the challenge to create desserts that have all the elements a restaurant dessert would have such as ice creams and sorbets but because of transport and refrigera-

tion issues you can’t always have all those elements. However, we are always working on it and its changing for the better. We want to be able to offer our clients an experience in their home or at their event that would be like being in the finest of restaurants.

[www.culinarycapers.com](http://www.culinarycapers.com)

## **Shots of Sparkling Wine and Summer Fruit**

Kim Collishaw, Pastry Chef

Serves 40 2-ounce shot glasses

3 cups sparkling wine  
1-½ cups water  
1-½ cups sugar  
12 leaves of gelatin

Seasonal fresh berries such as raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, currants

Whipped cream, for garnish

1. Place an assortment of berries in the bottom of the shot glasses. Set aside.
2. Soften the gelatin leaves in cold water.
3. Combine water and sugar and bring to a boil until all the sugar is dissolved.
4. Squeeze out all the water out of the gelatin and add to the hot sugar syrup.
5. Combine syrup and sparkling wine.
6. Pour liquid in the shot glasses approx. ¾ full over the berries.
7. Refrigerate for a minimum of 4 hours or until set.
8. When set, pipe whipped cream over the top of gelatin and garnish with more berries.

