

# UPEI'S AWARD WINNING COOK

By John O'Brien

Peter Wiederkehr, the head cook at UPEI's cafeteria, has been selected as one of ten finalists in the New Zealand Lamb Association's national "cook-off" competition which will take place next Saturday, at the George Brown College in Toronto.

The object of the competition is to cook the best lamb dish in Canada, with the world's best lamb from New Zealand.

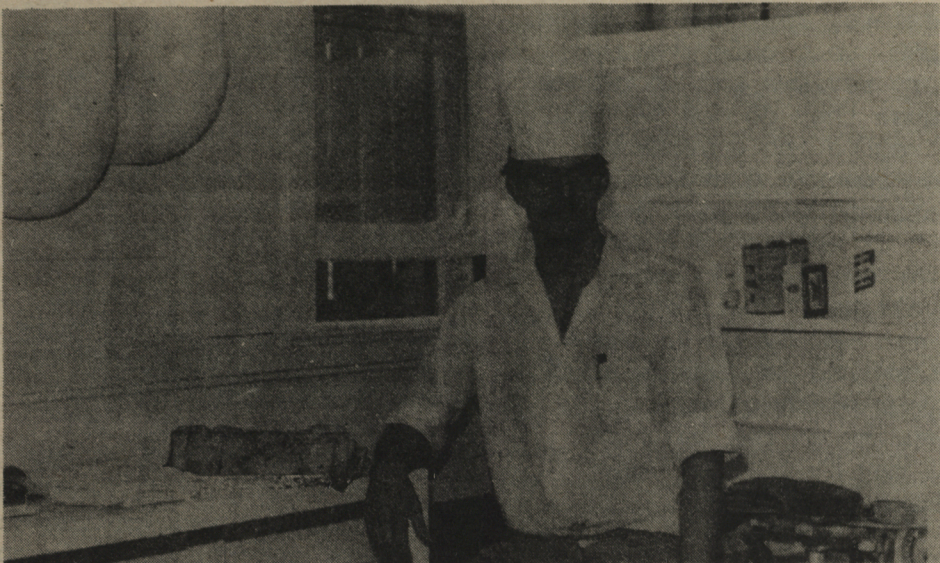
"The salt in the air, in New Zealand, goes into the meat of the lamb and makes it the best in the world," explains Peter in his strong Swiss accent.

Peter, who speaks German, French, Italian, Spanish, and English grew up and learned his trade in Zurich, Switzerland. In 1968 he began his three years of apprenticeship in Zurich where he finished as the seventh best cook in Switzerland. His specialty is in doing buffets, the latest of which is well recorded in a pile of mouthwatering photographs on his office desk.

In Zurich, as part of his final examination, Peter had to bone sides of beef, pork, lamb, and veal; as well as prepare ten different kinds of fish dishes according to the best recipe for each. There are time limits to each exam: for example, there was

a two-hour limit to bone the side of beef.

In 1977 Peter came to Canada and cooked at the Jasper Park Lodge for six months. After that he decided to make his home in Canada and he plans to become a Canadian next year.



Last year Peter worked at the old "Bluenose" in Charlottetown and after that closed he began working for Beaver Foods.

"Why Beaver Foods?"

"The money!", he quickly responds, "They pay very good money here!"

"But with your qualifications couldn't you make better money in other parts of Canada?"

"Oh yes!", says Peter, "Jasper Park Lodge offered me \$9.63 per hour and that was last year; it would be about \$12.00 now; but I hate

to leave the Island....I just love it here!"

"Does working for Beaver Foods in a cafeteria doing quantity cooking stifle one's creative abilities?"

"No, I am free to create and use some imagination as long as I don't overdraw

plans to go to Europe to learn to cook, that "you'd better bring lots of money!" First year costs the student between \$12,000 and \$15,000, half of which goes for expenses such as: knives, clothes, hat, shoes, books, and other cooking necessities. The second year costs about \$3,000, and their third year apprentices are paid.

Peter is taking the upcoming competition very seriously; "I am very nervous...even now I am nervous." About his chances of winning the contest: "I will win...I have to win [why?] I have to prove to the students that I am a good cook...I am going to win!"

From the back reaches of the kitchen comes a chorus from the other workers: "Messy! Don't forget messy! He is a messy cook!"

What will Peter cook in the national competition next Saturday...what is the recipe? Nice try, but it won't work! A good artist never gives away the secret to his creation; a good businessman doesn't give away a marketable commodity; and a good cook never gives away the recipe. Peter is all three! However, the menu will read: "Lamb Tenderloins with Taragon, from the best New Zealand lamb, served with four different vegetables and potato."

my budget. It's good here."

About his ideas for menu planning, Peter had this to say: "I try to make it spicier and better and the students like it...but there are always bad apples... there will always be some complaints, but that doesn't bother me too much...you get used to it!...I cooked European food, and at first, the students wouldn't eat it, but I said, 'Try it', and they liked it."

Peter wanted to be a cook since he was six years old, but he warns anyone who

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