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The Making of a Zuckerbaker: Apprenticeship and Tools of an Austrian Baker, Exhibit Brochure

Tim Bottorff

Wilfried Iskat

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The Modern Pastry Baker

The traditional apprenticeship system still survives in parts of Europe, and classically trained pastry makers still practice their trade in finer restaurants, but more modern schooling and training methods are now commonplace.

In the United States, the best baking programs, such as those at the Culinary Institute of America, attempt to blend classroom education with hands-on experience and stress the importance of seeking certification through entities such as the Retailer's Bakery Association (RBA) or the American Culinary Federation (ACF). The various levels of certification offered, much like under the old apprenticeship system, require a combination of experience and written and practical exams.

For More Information On...

History, Apprenticeship System, and More:

Katz, Solomon H. (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Food and Culture*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2003. Rosen Ref. GT2850 .E53.

Smith, Andrew F. (ed.). *Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. Rosen Ref. TX349 .E45.

Wechsberg, Joseph. *The Cooking of Vienna's Empire*. New York: Time-Life Books, 1968. Rosen Gen. Coll. TX721 .W4.

And our very own Dr. Wilfried Iskat, at the Rosen College!

Modern Pastry Making, Career Guidance, and More:

Culinary Institute of America. *Baking and Pastry: Mastering the Art and Craft*. Hoboken: Wiley, 2004. Rosen Gen. Coll. TX763 .B3234.

Dornenburg, Andrew and Page, Karen. *Becoming a Chef*. Hoboken: Wiley, 2003. Rosen Gen. Coll. TX911.3 V62 D67.

MacLauchlan, Andrew. *The Making of a Pastry Chef*. New York: Wiley, 1999. Rosen Gen. Coll. TX649 .A1 M33 1999.

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Exhibit Design

Curators:

- Dr. Wilfried Iskat, Associate Professor, Rosen College of Hospitality Management
- Tim Bottorff, Reference Librarian, Universal Orlando Foundation Library, Rosen College

Artifacts loaned by:

- Dr. Wilfried Iskat, Associate Professor, Rosen College of Hospitality Management



Universal Orlando Foundation Library At the Rosen College of Hospitality Mgmt.

University of Central Florida
9907 Universal Boulevard
Orlando, FL 32819-8701
407-903-8100
rosenlib@mail.ucf.edu
<http://library.ucf.edu/rosen>

The Making of a Zuckerbäcker:



Apprenticeship and Tools of an Austrian Pastry Baker

On Display

January 9 - March 17, 2006

at the

Universal Orlando Foundation Library

of the

Rosen College of Hospitality

Management

The Traditional Apprenticeship System

The current “celebrity chef” craze notwithstanding, the culinary arts have largely been marginalized throughout the history of America. Prior to the 1940s, no systematic course of study existed to teach someone to cook in a restaurant, and, until very recently, the *chefs de cuisine* of fine dining establishments were nearly always trained in Europe.

In contrast, many European countries have utilized for centuries an apprenticeship system in which chefs are trained through several years of schooling, on-the-job training, and rigorous written and oral examinations.

Not surprisingly, in such well-developed apprenticeship systems, many specializations are possible, and the vocabularies of these nations are reflective of this culinary diversity. In Austria, a country famous for its pastries, a *Patissier* is a general term for a pastry chef who makes many different kinds of desserts, a *Lebzelter* works with gingerbread, a *Zuckerbäcker* (literally, “sugar baker”) specializes in making sweet pastries, and so on.



Apfelstrudel

Indeed, there is perhaps no better country to learn about pastries and pastry making than Austria, home to the *Apfelstrudel* and *Krapfen* pastries, to the world-famous Demel and Hotel Sacher pastry shops, and to countless types of delicious coffees and *Schlagobers* (whipped cream) to wash it all down with!

Thus this exhibit invites you to travel back to 1950s Austria to examine the apprenticeship of a *Zuckerbäcker*, to a time of baking with the hands and with traditional tools, to a time of careful methods and delicate pastries — all of a sort to be found today only in the finest European pastry shops.

Tools of the Trade

Pastry bakers who work in the traditional style make a small number of pastries each day by hand.



Various cutting & edging tools

They use a wide assortment of tools for cutting, shaping, molding, decorating, and otherwise transforming simple ingredients such as flour and eggs into tiny masterpieces of edible art.



Ice cream mold, open (left) and closed (right) — the mold was sealed with fat and placed on ice until ready to be served, when the seal would be broken and the ice cream freed from the mold by plunging it into warm water

Some of the tools in this exhibit are antiques from a by-gone era, while others are still very much in use today.



Pastries and coffee

The end result is an often dazzling display of intricate decorative pastries, in all sizes, shapes, and colors!



Dough divider— used for cutting dough into even strips



An array of small, colorful pastries

Dr. Iskat — Certified Journeyman Pastry Baker



Raised in Austria and Germany, Rosen’s own Dr. Wilfried Iskat completed a baking apprenticeship in Austria from 1954-1957 and later worked as a *Zuckerbäcker* in the famous Demel pastry shop in Vienna.

I found an apprenticeship in a pastry factory called Konditorei Marietta, where pastries were mass-produced and sold in stores throughout metropolitan Vienna. Thus the daily output of pastries was by the thousands of pieces, whereas my fellow trade school classmates would be trained in manual skills producing pastries by the dozens. I missed learning the more traditional production techniques used in making only small quantities.

Fortunately, I soon found a young executive chef who lived nearby and asked if he would allow me to work with him (without compensation). He initially did not warm up to the idea, but after a few weeks of menial and unpleasant work (cleaning toilets, peeling potatoes, etc.) he saw that I was still eager to learn from him. He took me under his wing and trained me as a pastry baker. I worked for him every free day of my apprenticeship from 1954-1957, which meant that I worked at the pastry factory 4 days a week, spent 1 day at trade school, and spent weekends at his restaurant.

When I had completed my 3 years of pastry baking trade school with satisfactory results, I sat for the government mandated exams, which consisted of a 4 to 6 hour written exam plus a 6 hour practical bake-off and oral exam. For this, I received the Austrian Tradesman Certificate as a Pastry Baker Journeyman. Instead of now working in a pastry shop I chose to work with the chef who had been my secondary apprentice supervisor, who took me on as his pastry chef when he and I took seasonal jobs in Austria’s many summer and winter resort hotels.

Dr. Iskat went on to earn a master’s degree at Cornell Univ. and a Ph.D. at New York Univ., to working internationally with well-known lodging companies and directing the hospitality program at Schiller International Univ., and now to teaching at the Rosen College, but he still has fond memories of working as a pastry baker — and of course he still makes a delicious *Apfelstrudel*!