



While still in high school Tina Tang finished her first level of Professional Cook training through NIC's ACE-IT program.

Tina is now a national prize winning Red Seal chef at a top Okanagan restaurant and winery.

# A SWEET CAREER

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BY JEN COX  
Special to the Comox Valley Record

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**W**hen Tina Tang began her chef's training as a high school ACE-IT student at NIC, she told friends that she planned to be a Red Seal certified chef at top B.C. resorts within the next two years.

No one doubted her.

By 18, she had already spent three years, 2010-2013, working at the Kingfisher Oceanside Resort and Spa restaurant, where she moved from preparing breakfasts to cooking for weddings and events. She started at NIC while still in high school, and quickly became a junior member of the North Vancouver Island Chefs' Association.

By the time she left NIC, she had a string of awards and accolades to her name. In addition to a \$1,500 BC Hospitality Foundation Scholarship, Tang won a gold medal at the Skills Canada North Island regional event, and a silver medal at the BC Skills Canada competition.

"I'm a competitor," Tang said. "From the first spark of competition, something clicked. I thought, wow, I could do this for a living."

Four years later, she's still winning.

Her greatest accomplishment so far has been placing second in the National Canadian Culinary Federation Junior Culinary Competition, which took place in St. John's, N.L. last year.

"I prepared for months for it. I would come into work at 8 a.m. before my shift (which started at 1 p.m.) to practise my dishes over and over again," she said. "I would stay up late rewriting my work plans to make sure everything was perfect. I was definitely up against some talented young chefs and was



PHOTOGRAPHY BY NIC

From Kingfisher  
to Kelowna ~  
a young chef's  
journey continues.

super ecstatic about the outcome.”

In April 2016, Tang was awarded her second Les Dames d’Escoffier-BC Chapter scholarship in recognition of her ability, commitment and passion in the culinary arts.

The scholarship provides Tang the opportunity to participate in specialized training. The first time she won, she enrolled in an introductory wine and spirits course. With her current scholarship, she has her eyes on a chocolate academy in Montreal.

“I had originally signed up for a limited edition chocolate and pastry course based on the 2016 Summer Olympics in Brazil,” Tang said. “Unfortunately that course has been postponed so I’m looking into another chocolate class.”

As the pastry chef at the Grapevine Restaurant at Gray Monk Estate Winery in Kelowna, Tang pays close attention to detail, developing new recipes to maintain a mouth-watering selection of pastries, desserts, bread and other baked goods.

“Ever since I moved to the Okanagan, my interest in the sweet side of the kitchen has grown,” Tang says. “This position was the perfect challenge for me to expand my pastry knowledge. I am in charge of our entire dessert menu; plating, recipe development- it’s all me.”

For more information, visit [nic.bc.ca/trades](http://nic.bc.ca/trades).

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