A Real Treat
Yann Fougere brings his delicious vision to Victoria

by Sam Coll

Nothing is set in stone when it comes to business, particularly not in Victoria’s highly competitive food services industry. But when Bon Macaron Patisserie Ltd. opened its doors in December 2012, Yann Fougere, owner/operator and BCom ’08 alumnus, was confident he was about to offer his adopted city something special.

“I grew up with macarons, they were always one of my favourite treats,” he reflects, referring to his time growing up in Paris, France. “I knew that people in Canada were used to macaroons, the coconut treat, so I wanted to introduce them to the delicacy of traditional French macarons.”

Soft and moist, bite-sized, with assertive flavours—Bon Macaron offers over 20 varieties, which are constantly changing—macarons are the new “it” dessert. Fougere and his business partner, David Boetti, have spent hours perfecting the craft of making these tiny treats and have even started making savoury varieties such as cheese-filled, or hummus and poppy seed.

When asked if he is concerned about potentially riding the wave of the dessert “craze culture” that has seen the stocks of cupcake and donut makers rise and fall in recent years, Fougere seems nonplussed. “For us it is important to develop relationships with other local businesses,” he explains. “We have the local florist bring in flowers so we can do floral arrangements with macarons [and] we have partnerships with wedding planners to ensure our macarons are always an option for caterers. These partnerships help us to create solidity in our business going forward.”

Fougere also understands the realities of being a service-based modern business. “We’re on social media every day, connecting with people through Twitter and Facebook,” he says. “We ask our patrons what flavours they want to see next and then they can come in and see them in the store. It’s important to connect with your customers in this way.”

Fougere knew that Victoria would be the perfect place to launch their delicious vision as the city has become a centre for culinary delights, and word of mouth spreads quickly in this close knit city.

And the dapper young Parisian is no neophyte when it comes to developing and executing a business plan—his training at Gustavson, as well as his dynamic and challenging experiences interning in Hong Kong and serving as the assistant public relations officer for the National Art Gallery in Namibia, have prepared him well for the rigours of day-to-day management.

“Our final project in Gustavson was to develop a real business plan—this is something I referred to constantly when I was creating my business plan for Bon Macaron.”

The pair’s vision for the future extends beyond the shores of Vancouver Island. There are plans afoot to open new patisseries in Vancouver and other parts of Western Canada. Fougere sees Canadians’ newfound love of macarons as getting stronger over time, and the prospect of having his delicious product around for years to come makes the future seem very sweet indeed.

Photo courtesy Yann Fougere