



AMBER VASTAG (L) AND GABRIELLE BINAY (R) GAINED PAID EMPLOYMENT AT BELLBIRD DINING & BAR AFTER SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING THEIR WORK PLACEMENT



HOSPITALITY STUDENTS PICKING FRESH INGREDIENTS AND HERBS WITH AMBER FOR DINNER SERVICE

FROM WORK PLACEMENT TO PAID EMPLOYMENT



John Edmondson High School students recently enjoyed a unique learning experience during a two-day Class Chefs event hosted by Bellbird Dining & Bar. **Guided by Bellbird Dining employees Amber Vastag and Gabrielle Binay**, these students crafted a sumptuous degustation menu featuring six exquisite tasting plates and beverages.

Remarkably, just a year ago, Amber and Gabrielle were in a similar position as work placement students at the same establishment. Their journey from students to skilled professionals is an inspiring tale of growth and opportunity. During the Class Chefs event, they shared their expertise with 15 eager students from the Year 11 & 12 VET Hospitality class, covering essential skills for managing both kitchen operations and front-of-house responsibilities.

The event was a resounding success, garnering immense praise from the 68 guests who attended. Many expressed their astonishment at the high quality of the fine dining experience, especially considering it was delivered by students.

"I ORIGINALLY HAD ANOTHER CAREER PATHWAY IN MIND, BUT AS I DID MY WORK PLACEMENTS, I BECAME INSPIRED BY THE CHEFS. MY WORK PLACEMENT REALLY INFLUENCED MY DECISION TO TAKE A ROLE AS AN APPRENTICE CHEF".

-Amber Vastag, Apprentice Chef and former work placement student (Bellbird Dining & Bar)

The event's success was also attributed to the skilled oversight of **Federico Rekowski, the restaurant manager and a Head Chef** trained at Le Cordon Bleu. His leadership ensured a flawless execution of the two-day event.

This incredible opportunity stemmed from the one-week work placements organised by SWC at Bellbird Dining & Bar the previous year. Amber's outstanding skills, positive attitude, and eagerness to learn during her placement earned her an apprenticeship in the kitchen, setting her on the path to becoming a chef. Gabrielle, recognised for her excellent customer service and strong work ethic, secured a part-time position in the front-of-house team.

This collaboration not only provided practical experience for the students but also opened doors to rewarding career paths for dedicated individuals like Amber and Gabrielle.

Bellbird Dining is located at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, the venue of many past SWC Youth Mental Health Summits, they are part of Liverpool City Council and a popular work placement host.



Watch Amber's video featured on Liverpool Council's website for their "Love Working Local" series.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrSVk-ZWJQc>



FRONT OF HOUSE AND BACK OF HOUSE HOSPITALITY STUDENTS TRAINING WITH AMBER (L) AND GABRIELLE (R)

