

Capital Pancakes : The name has changed, but not the cook.

Crepe cooking was learnt from my mother in the first part of the last century back in Watford just outside London. Pancake cooking was learnt in 1968 (aged 22) from an ol' fella from Copeka, Kansas.

In May 1969, I spent a night nailing down restaurant floorboards. Finishing at dawn, and without sleep, I switched into cook mode at Melbourne's first pancake restaurant.

From that opening morning, I ran the restaurant, including cooking and all cook training for the next six hectic years, though I did eventually get some sleep. A few months after we opened, I was invited to purchase a share in the business. Thus, at the age of 23, I became a restaurateur.

Sixteen years later, I drove to Canberra to inspect an inauspicious concrete walled basement warehouse in the middle of a bus intersection in the city. There was neither plumbing nor electricity - not even a street entrance. Five weeks later, just before Christmas in 1984, I opened the doors to Canberra's first pancake restaurant.

Thirty-three years later, and despite inducements to move, I am still in the same premises and still cooking. Canberrans would become disorientated if I moved.

And now we have changed, but only the name, not the cook.

Being hopelessly old-fashioned, all the food will be prepared in-house from only the best ingredients. What we serve will be restricted to what my family would eat at home and yes, I'm still training all the cooks.

Over the course of five decades, I have cooked pancakes in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Frankston, Geelong, Kuala Lumpur and Canberra.

Now is it that my pancakes are so light and fluffy?

There are many factors, but of most significance is the thickness of the steel hotplate providing stability of heat, the close array of gases providing evenness of heat, and a temperature that is hot enough to force the batter up. It's less the leavening agent than the air that gives the 'rise'. The pancakes gently ascend like a hot-air balloon.

When you place the pancakes in your mouth, ensure that you snap your lips shut quickly, lest they float out again.

Welcome to Capital Pancakes

Philip Barton
The Original Pancake Cook