



worldskills  
UK Alumni

## Alistair Birt: Confectioner / Pastry Cook

**Competed in:** WorldSkills Calgary 2009 – Team UK  
**Awarded:** Medallion for Excellence  
**Home town:** Hillingdon  
**Region:** London  
**Date of birth:** 25/02/1988  
**Age at competition:** 21  
**Learning provider:** Thames Valley University

### Qualifications

- BSc Culinary Arts Management



### What was your route into Team UK?

Alistair was at university when Training Manager and WorldSkills expert Yolande Stanley spotted his work in class and suggested that he considered entering competitions. Starting at the Hotel Olympia competition, Alistair quickly caught the competition bug and went on to the WorldSkills selection. Alistair was the only short-listed competitor in confectionery and pastry cooking but still had to reach the WorldSkills standard in both the Squad and Team Selection. Alistair was successful at both competitions and won himself a place in Team UK.

### Why did you choose to get involved with WorldSkills?

*“Once I got introduced to WorldSkills and saw what potential there was, I realised the opportunity was too good to turn down.”*

### What training did you undertake as part of your journey to WorldSkills and what impact did this have on your life?

Alistair’s intensive training program took him all over the UK and even to America. Alistair was training whilst completing his second year at university, which made it a massive commitment. With extremely careful time management, Alistair managed to pull it off.

*“The training was great and I visited a range of restaurants to help build my skill, but the time commitment meant it took over my life.”*

### What was WorldSkills like?

*“It was great fun and the competition was much bigger than anything I could have expected.”*

### What did you have to do during the competition?

Alistair completed eight modules over the 22 hour competition period. Each module had its own deadline and they were completed in the prescribed sequence. Alistair’s modules included creating a chocolate centrepiece, making small pastries, sugar work and marzipan modelling.

### Who inspired you during your journey to WorldSkills?

*“Yolande was a great inspiration to me throughout my journey to Calgary. Her support and encouragement really helped to focus me.”*

### What did being part of Team UK and competing at WorldSkills mean to you?

*“It was great to be there in Calgary putting all the hard work during the preparation months into practice. It was also an honour to represent my country and to be part of such an exceptional team.”*

**How did it feel to receive a Medallion for Excellence?**

Alistair had set himself some realistic expectations entering into the competition.

*"The UK don't have the same sort of heritage and history in my skill that some of the other countries do so it was always going to be difficult for me. I went to Calgary with one aim which was to beat the previous Team UK competitors in the Confectioner/Pastry Cook skill. I'm pleased to say I did it!"*

**What has competing done for you both personally and professionally?**

Competing has done wonders for Alistair already; he has recently started a new job with William Curley, British Patisier and Chocolatier.

*"Competing at WorldSkills has raised my profile in the industry and my CV looks much better now. I've grown so much throughout the journey as well. The demands on you as a competitor and your time make you much more confident and organised."*

**Would you encourage others to get involved in WorldSkills?**

*"You have to put everything into it as a competitor but the rewards are worth it. I think everyone with a skill should give it a go, you don't have anything to lose!"*

**What do you think of the event being held in London in 2011?**

Alistair is really looking forward to the competition coming to London in 2011, as it will give his family and friends an opportunity to see what WorldSkills is all about.

*"It will be great for the UK but more importantly it will raise awareness of skills and showcase what they are all about."*

**What is the dream?**

*"I haven't really planned the future out yet, but whatever I do I'm going to be the best at it."*



For more information about the WorldSkills, UK Alumni, contact the UK Skills communications team:  
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