

# **Frisbee is a game for the ages**

**By Carol Phillips**

*The Spectator*

Gary Auerbach was nine years old when he first learned to throw a Frisbee at summer camp. It had first caught his attention when he attended festivals in the 1970s with his family and he saw people throwing around the flying disc. "I just thought it was the neatest ' thing and I wanted to be like them." he said.

The 30 year-old from Toronto was the 1995 world freestyle champion and continues to travel the world for competitions. But he has also formed the company Spinning Bees which visits schools and camps, corporate workshops and festivals, putting on demonstrations and teaching people the art and the fun of throwing a Frisbee – as well as a few tricks like spinning it on their index finger and hitting targets.

The Spectator caught up with Auerbach at C.B. Stirling public school on the Mountain, where he was putting grade schoolers through the motions of catching, throwing, and passing a Frisbee around their bodies.

Flying discs are called Frisbees because the discs evolved from the aerodynamic qualities of pie tins made by the Frisbie Baking Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut in the 1920s.

In 1948, a fellow named Fred Morrison produced the first plastic flying disc, and in 1957, Wham-o acquired the patent and started manufacturing the modern Frisbee, initially called the Pluto Platter.

Those first discs came with the instructions: Play Catch – Invent Games.

Frisbee is a brand name now owned by Mattel – many of the best flying discs are made by rival companies like DiscCraft, so aficionados usually refer to the flying saucer as a disc.

More than 100 million Frisbees have been sold in North America, and it is now used for such games as DiscGolf, and Frisbee Bowling. Six to eight countries compete in international freestyle, and anywhere from 30 to 40 countries participate in the most popular Frisbee sport – Ultimate.

Auerbach has managed to make a living out of throwing a Frisbee because of his company. Otherwise, there are no sponsors.

Despite his credentials, Auerbach says it's always a learning experience when he goes out to throw a flying disc.

"Every time I pick up a Frisbee and start practising, I just learn a new type of way to pass it around my body."

If you'd like to get in touch with Auerbach and his Spinning Bees company, Call (416) 778 8199.

