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THE DISH

Chef Profile

Local Roots

BY JESSICA LANIEWSKI

With a few cups of flour and the crack of a fresh egg, Chef Michael Kelly assembles the dough for butternut squash ravioli in his immaculate kitchen at the Rustic Kitchen Bistro and Bar in Hingham. After quickly simmering in boiling water, the sweet pockets of flavor are laid over a bed of baby spinach, dried cranberries, and roasted squash for a mouthwatering entrée.

Kelly, the Chef de Cuisine for the Rustic Kitchen in Hingham's upscale Derby Street Shoppes has been serving up innovative and tasty dishes at the restaurant since January 2007. Sourcing local and seasonal products for his dishes, Kelly makes fresh pasta daily at the Rustic Kitchen such as three types of ravioli, tagliatelle, and spaghetti.

"My culinary roots are Italian but I really like the New England seasons and local products," says Kelly, who plates flavorful dishes such as Italian spring rolls, rich wild mushroom pappardelle, and a parmesan crusted veal cutlet. In addition to serving lunch and dinner every day, Kelly and his crew also turn out fontina and shaved prosciutto scrambled eggs, a tangy lemoncello shrimp cocktail, and rich eggs benedict for Sunday brunch.

Kelly is a fan of ingredients that are "super seasonal" such as Nantucket Bay scallops and delicate squash blossoms. The menu changes three times a year in collaboration with Executive Chef Tom Holloway who oversees the other two Rustic Kitchens. The classy Hingham location invites you to sit, relax, and enjoy one of Kelly's tasty, homemade meals.

"There are a few different routes you can take to be a chef," says Kelly. "One of them is to work as hard as you can and absorb everything."



After working his way through his teenage years at Suffolk Downs, Kelly took a position at Stars in



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Hingham and three years later he moved to nearby Tosca where the open kitchen and high-end cuisine and environment taught him discipline. "I say I'm self-taught, but I really went to the Tosca Culinary Academy," says Kelly grinning of his five years of valuable working experience at the restaurant.

Now in control of his own pristine kitchen, Kelly takes younger chefs under his tutelage as his way of "making the universe equal."

"I'm kind of obsessed with food," says Kelly, who never tires of serving New England comfort food with an Italian flair. **SSL**



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