



Meet 13th Street Winery's Chef Alex



A local of St Catharines, Chef Alex Barron found the kitchen at a young age working with a local catering company. During his final high school years, he really started focusing on building a culinary career.

After completing the Apprenticeship Preparation Course offered by a local high school, it seemed only natural to continue in studying at the Niagara Culinary Institute. The program offered a travel and work opportunity and Alex chose to make his move West, to Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta to work at the historic Kilmorey Lodge. He returned to Niagara to complete his training at Niagara Culinary Institute but then returned to the West Coast where he called Vancouver Island home for ten years.

Having a fresh start in such a vibrant city with beautiful ingredients and the ocean's bounty at a hand's reach, lit a fierce fire in the young cook's heart. He started getting serious at the Hotel Rialto's Veneto Lounge. This brand-new hotel and restaurant was awarded 'Best New Restaurant in Canada in 2009' by Toronto's 'Where' Industry Magazine, as well as several other awards.

His passion for food and travel led him on two cross country and international competition BBQ tours: BC's Sun Peaks Ski Resort and Knight Inlet Lodge (a fly-in floating wilderness resort.) He also worked at Dolphins Resort in Campbell River, in the north of Vancouver Island. Dolphins boasts chartered heli-fishing and rustic cabins on the Discovery Passage and is a perfect venue for weddings and special getaways.

In the spring of 2017 Alex returned to Ontario and joined the 13th Street Winery team as the winery's Chef. Having spent most of his time training in hotels and resorts, a winery was a natural progression for a young chef seeking a rewarding challenge.

When asked why he relocated back to Niagara, he simply responds, " Aside from my family, I'm just home to dig up my roots and stir the pot."

Favourite Ingredient: My favourite ingredients would have to be time. Not the herb. The time it takes to create and craft beautiful dishes. The finesse and flow, the love and passion that comes with time given to the dish and respect to the products you have in your hands. And butter. Always need butter.

Wildest / strangest ingredient:

Having worked in a rainforest on the Pacific Ocean, many wild plants and creatures were always available. I always loved harvesting wild mushrooms and fishing for guests' dinners. I never turned down a chance to work with the Giant Pacific Octopus!

Most underrated ingredient?

The ones closest by. So many cooks neglect the bounty of the land they stand on.



Best culinary tool?

A sharp knife, a dry cloth, and patience.

What's one thing people would be surprised to find in your fridge?

How empty it is.

What's one dish you can't live without?

Bacon, eggs and toast.

What go-to dinner do you cook for friends or family?

I always try something different and push the limits with them, as they get my humour better than anyone! Last Easter I made molè smoked rabbit tacos for the family... Almost everyone was amused.