



## *See* CHEF MATTY COWAN *see*

As a latchkey kid, Matty Cowan would prepare snacks for his younger sister to tide them over until their mother got home from work. He was always playing around with food “I was one of the originators of the Cheez Whiz in your KD”.

When he was only 14, he took a job as a dishwasher to earn pocket money. While scraping plates and scrubbing pots, the young teenager worshiped the swashbuckling cooks behind the stoves. It inspired him to take cooking classes throughout high school, which culminated in a job placement at The Globe Restaurant near Alliston. He stayed on after the externship ended and found a mentor in its chef, Beth Hunt. “She was tough but kind,” he says. “She was an inspiring mentor and always drove her cooks to do their best. She’s still one of my Chef heroes!”

Matty then moved to Toronto to attend George Brown’s Chef’s Training program. After graduating Matty took a position with Oliver Bonacini’s Steakhouses under mentor Chef Paul Benallick (now Chef at Cluny) who taught him respect for ingredients and technique and the importance of professionalism both in and out of the kitchen. Matty says “he’s still a good friend and mentor and I will always be humbled by his skill and depth of cooking knowledge”. Matty also took some time to enjoy the mountains in Banff where he landed his first Sous Chef position under German Master Chef Martin Brenner at Sunshine Village. “Chef Brenner taught me that you don’t need to be hard on staff or carry a bad temper to produce great food”.

After moving back to Toronto and spending a few more years working and learning as Sous in some of the city’s great restaurants, Matty was offered his first Chef position at The Devonshire Inn, in Prince Edward County. “Living and working in The County really opened my eyes to local foods and seasonality. I’d often pick up my orders straight from the farm and drive them back to the restaurant to be cooked that day” After the unfortunate closure of the Devonshire Matt decided to head back to Toronto.

“I’m so lucky to be apart of the food scene here in TO. We’re still a young foodie city, but we’re growing quickly. It’s a really exciting time for Toronto. My wife Meg and I both adore this city and we’re so proud to call Toronto home”. Over the last few years Matty has held the Chef position at well regarded restaurants The Rosebud, Simple Bistro and Catch. Matty says he’s “really looking forward to the future with Portland Variety, it’s such an incredible restaurant and I’m so fortunate to have the opportunity to work with such a fantastic team”.