

NICK RUSTICUS

Where are you from?

I was born and raised in a small mid-western farm town called Hudsonville, Michigan.

Why did you start cooking?

At a very young age I was influenced by the restaurant and hospitality industry. From as far back as I can remember, visiting my grandpa's kitchens and helping my mom and grandma bake cakes and pastries always left me excited, curious and wanting to learn more.

How would you describe your style of cooking? What is your "signature" dish?

I try not to corner myself into one signature dish, but I love working with the freshest seafood. I can get my hands on when seasonally appropriate. My cooking style is very rooted in classic French techniques but I am always looking for new tricks to pick up. Any time I am curating a new dish, my focus is accessibility and seasonality. I take the relationship between product and consumer very seriously.

What is your experience in the kitchen?

This goes all the way back to cooking with my family. From there, I have been very blessed with my opportunities at a young age. I worked my way up the chain of command at the French fine dine restaurant Binkley's up to sous chef. After Binkley's, I worked with Il Tocco conducting lavish and intimate catering and private events. I then spent time as executive chef at Second Story Liquor Bar in Old Town Scottsdale before going back to my hometown to open my first restaurant. Currently, I focus on consulting and traveling as a private chef.

What are some rewarding culinary accomplishments?

My career has allowed me to be a part of a lot of incredible opportunities spreading through multiple states. Most recently, my team and I saved a wedding last minute after their original caterer fell through. We had 90 minutes to prepare appetizers and a 3-course menu for over 150 guests. It was an amazing experience.

What do you most enjoy about being a chef?

The opportunities I am able to experience along with the incredible people and clients I get to work with. I love working alongside the changing seasons as it is always keeping my creative wheels turning and the happiness my food brings to the people I get to cook for.



Favorite restaurants locally and nationally?

The list is far too long to get into here, but if I had to do a dream breakfast/lunch/dinner at this point, I would start out in Chicago at CC Ferns or Crepe Bar just around the corner in Tempe. For lunch, fried chicken at the Southerner in Michigan or Worth Takeaway in Mesa. Dinner would definitely be Rich Table in San Francisco or Rooister out of Chicago again, rounding out the night with a good bottle of wine chosen for me at Sauvage bottle Shop.

Which chefs do you most admire and why?

Honestly, I admire anyone willing to step knowingly into the craziness of our industry every day, striving to be better than the day before. I have met some of the most inspiring people in all areas of our industry, ranging from dishwasher to executive chef.

Instagram/Facebook info

Instagram - @nickrusticus

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