

Bio – Chef Patrick Engel

Hi everybody – I'm Patrick Engel. My cooking career began as a procrastination technique during University that seems to have gotten a little carried away. Armed with a rolled up Psychology degree and funded by less than thrilled parents, I enrolled at George Brown College in Sept 1997 in Culinary Management.

My first significant job in the industry was at On The 20 for the Summer of '98 under Michael Olson in what feels like the early days of the current Niagara food and wine renaissance. Connections through Chef Olson landed me a job at Toronto's Rodney's Oyster House for my second year of College. Working at On the 20 on weekends and Rodney's during the week left little time for school, but this is where I truly learned of the rigors of the industry. Choosing to stay in Toronto after graduation, Rodney's became my home for 3 years. I was named Executive Chef in the Spring of 2000, one year out of school.

When it was time to move along, I went from "nothing but seafood" to "nothing but meat", leaving the kitchen for a year to cut meat at Whitehouse Meats in Toronto's legendary St. Lawrence Market. Missing the kitchen, I returned to restaurants in 2003 at recently opened Bymark Restaurant. A great experience cut short by a broken leg and an opportunity to tour North America as an Indy car team chef. Thanks Walker Racing! That's a whole other story.

After a whirlwind few years, I settled into St. Catharines with my wife Marnie. Returning to Cave Spring company, I returned to On The 20 and ran 12 Waterfront Grill in 2005.

I truly evolved into the chef I am today during my 6 years as Executive Chef at The Good Earth Food Company. Here I was a chef but also a facilitator, instructor, and sometimes gardener. A great experience. Blogging about food and experience while at The Good Earth led to a great stint as a Senior Writer for the CBC Parents resource website as "*Chef Dad*".

In the early days of The Garrison House I'm proud to have been an associate chef, working with David Watt and his young staff to help build what is still my favourite local.

Currently I wear two hats as a chef. I have a steady part time position with Hospice Niagara – I craft meals for our residents, and I cater to community clients with our Day Hospice programs. This is a truly rewarding job – I create comfort food from scratch – 'Roots Cooking'. I also wear the hat of 'personal chef' – creating experiences and meals for a select group of clients for special events throughout the year.

I live in the South end of St. Catharines with my wife Marnie, and my sons Charlie and Johnny.