

Bio: Nathan Libertini, Chef, Napoli Ristorante

I was born and raised in Hamilton, Ontario. My family moved to Welland in 2002 where my parents purchased H.L. Cudney Funeral Home. I went to Notre Dame High School, which is where I started my culinary journey. I was able to fully immerse myself in the culinary program, where Chef Chris Begin started my training. He pushed me and saw my potential in baking. We did multiple competitions where I won 1st place at Niagara College Invitational High School Cook off, and placed 3rd at Ontario Skills. A great accomplishment for a high school student.

I then went on to Niagara College in the Culinary Management Program. This is where I really got to begin to figure out which direction I wanted to take - culinary or baking. I had excellent professors, who guided me through different challenges and pushed me to better myself. Mark Picone, still to this date is a great influence on my career. I finished Culinary Management, which included a 6-month stage in Pacentro, Abruzzo, Italy, in a two Michelin star restaurant called Taverna de Caldora.

Within a few of years I had worked at a couple different restaurants, including On the Waterfront with Emil Rinderlin, and Cherry Hill Golf Club with Tara Grobbs. Soon afterwards, I started at Commisso's Fresh Foods in the bakery, where I trained under Swiss Chocolatier Beni Sauter. This is where I got my real start. After a year, I became manager of the department for 3 years, which led me back to Niagara College to finish my baker's apprenticeship course. This took 3 years which included specialized courses. I soon thereafter wrote my Red Seal for Baker Patissier.

I then approached Gary Torraville if any open positions were available for teaching baking. He brought me in and I haven't left since. Going on 4 years now, this has been an amazing journey to be able to teach students the knowledge that I have acquired. Being able to see students grow with their skills and professionalism is incredible and very powerful.

I soon thereafter left Commisso's and headed to Napoli Ristorante which is where I resided for the past almost 5 years. I became Chef within the last two years, where I also acquired my Cooks Red Seal. I have recently stepped down as head chef in order for me to work more at Niagara College, because ultimately this is my end goal and just waiting for the full time position.