

Featured Chef: Devin Walsh

Written by Arizona Foothills Magazine

Featured Chef: Devin Walsh of Calistro California Bistro



Photography by Jackie Mercandetti

How did you get your start in the restaurant business?

My first kitchen job was while I was attending college at Tulane University in New Orleans. At the time, it was not a conscious decision to get a job in a kitchen, I simply needed a second job. Before I knew it, I had taken over the kitchen and was being allowed to influence the menu. I took a year off of college to cook at a prestigious restaurant in Boston to see if I had found a career that I wanted to pursue. After a year of “cooking bootcamp” at the Beacon Hill Hotel and Bistro, I returned to New Orleans to finish my degree. I cooked at Brennan’s in the French Quarter during this time. After graduating, I moved to NYC and five years later I found myself in Scottsdale, AZ.

What is your favorite Valley restaurant, besides your own?

My favorite Valley restaurant is Sassi. Great food, great setting, great service.

What is your favorite dish at your restaurant?

My favorite dish at Calistro Bistro will always be the newest dish. Right now, I have just introduced some new items to the dinner menu...my favorite being Alaskan Scallops with black truffled celery root and organic vegetables, tomato confit, and butternut squash-prawn emulsion.

What is the most memorable meal you’ve ever had?

My most memorable dining experience was lunch at Le Bernardin in NYC. I worked for Chef Eric Ripert while he consulted on the opening of Geisha and he rewarded me with a tasting menu for lunch. Needless to say, it was unforgettable.

If you could have anyone visit your restaurant, who would it be?

If I could have anyone visit my restaurant, Calistro Bistro, I would have to say it would be the 3 deans from my culinary school, the French Culinary Institute in NYC. Jacques Pepin, Alain Sailhac, and Andre Soltner are the masters of French cooking. While I have not abandoned the techniques of a French kitchen, I have abandoned the use of high fat ingredients in my kitchen. I do not feel that butter, mayo, and heavy cream are necessities in savory cooking and I believe that my food and flavors showcase this well. I would love to see what my old school French Chefs would have to say about this!

Name three ingredients that you have at home at all times.

Being the typical bachelor, I do not spend a lot of time in my home kitchen. I always have on hand Extra Virgin Olive Oil, homemade BBQ sauce, homemade chili paste. With these 3 ingredients, I find it really easy to make quick tasty meals with an easy clean up.

What is your favorite bottle of wine or cocktail?

I just bought my second case of Ken Wright-Carter Vineyard Pinot Noir 2007 for my personal use, so I would say that right now, this is what I am drinking.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I love Mountain Biking. It is a great way to enjoy Arizona. I also enjoy spending time with my 2 dogs.

[Click here for more information about Calistro California Bistro.](#)