Tyler Betzhold, CEC, Executive Chef, Dining Services

Tyler Betzhold joined the University of Richmond in June 2009. He was responsible for fine dining, catering and banquets, and high volume a la carte.

“I really love all aspects of the food world,” says Betzhold. “I love to work with ingredients that are not familiar to me because I’m always trying to discover new ways to learn and increase our guests’ experiences. I want fresh ingredients to be utilized whenever possible.” Betzhold also expresses a “great desire to learn about every culture from a food perspective.”

Away from the job, Betzhold spends time with his wife and daughter, gardens and engages in outdoor activities such as canoeing, kayaking, white water rafting, biking, and hiking.

CHEF FEATURE: UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Photos by UM Dining

Chefs Garden Dinners

University of Montana Dining introduced a new level of “wow” experience for students, staff, and community members at UM Chefs Garden Dinners held July 5, July 26 and September 14 this past summer. The culinary events, held at South Avenue Garden, attracted 38 guests, 15 guests, and 40 guests respectively. UM owns South Avenue Garden, which was developed in 2016 with a $10,000 grant from the Montana Agriculture Development Council.

“My vision on this series of events was to showcase the talents of chefs and gardeners in an outdoor garden setting, and to celebrate the current harvest with great friends, great food and chilled beverage,” says Camp Howard, UMD director.

“These dinners were designed as a way to allow our staff to step out of the bounds of their usual positions, have some fun with food, and interact more with the local community in a relaxed environment,” adds Brian Hedlesten, executive chef. “The events highlighted the skills of our staff—three teams of two chefs produced each event—and the wonderful bounty that was provided by Stasia Orkwiszewski, the UM Dining garden manager.”

Situated outside the Iron Griz Restaurant run by UM Dining, the event dinners started at 6 p.m. and finished at 9 p.m. Hedlesten and Iden Rodriguez, a campus chef, planned and executed the menu, which was approved by Hedlesten and by Howard. Hedlesten also supervised and assisted with set-up. The catering department provided a supervisor and three waitstaff. A local beverage catering company provided alcohol and two assistants.

The themed menus featured “Modern French” on July 5, “A Taste of Montana” on July 26, and “Carolina BBQ” on September 14. The dinners were open to the public by reservation only, and capped at 40 people. Tickets were sold per meal for $60 or as a packet for $180 for all three dinners. Nearly one-third of the guests attended all three dinners. “The final dinner was completely booked two weeks prior with several people asking if we had a waiting list,” says Hedlesten.

The dinners were marketed across the campus as well as in the local community. The majority of guests live in Missoula. Some brought out-of-town family members.

The event crew prepared meals either in the Food Zoo (a residence hall dining operation) kitchen located in the Emma B. Lommasson Center or in the Iron Griz Restaurant. “We used sous vide cooking and a barbecue grill onsite,” says Hedlesten.

The culinary team incorporated ingredients from the garden into the menus whenever possible. “We provided all the chefs with a list of produce growing and available in the garden at the time of their party to help them plan their menus,” says Hedlesten. For example, the September 14 menu featured herbs, beets, Swiss chard, kale, collard greens, ground cherries, peppers, sour cucumbers, honey, and peaches from the garden.
CHEF FEATURES

One favorite menu item, Candied Beets with Roasted Orange Peel, features fresh red and golden beets and basil from the UMD Garden. “This appetizer looks vibrant and serves as a great introduction to our garden,” says Heddlesten.

The South Carolina BBQ event also featured a tried-and-true Grilled Shrimp with Shishito Peppers & Jalapeno Cheddar Grits recipe served in the dining hall. “Camp, a Nashville native, said this was ‘some of the best grits’ he has had. We paired it with shrimp and grilled shishito peppers from the garden,” adds Heddlesten.

When preparing the recipe, Heddlesten advises, make sure the barbecue grill is hot when the shrimp hits the grill’s bars. “The bars give the shrimp nice marks and keep it from sticking,” he says. “We seasoned the shrimp with a little touch of lemon zest after it came off the grill to boost the flavor.”

Brian Heddlesten

Brian Heddlesten took his first steps into the culinary world at the age of 13. While experimenting with recipes in the “Sunset Cook Book of Breads” and family cookbooks, he discovered his love for cooking and particularly world cuisine. He stepped into his first culinary job with the Aramark Corporation and later worked for Sodexo and Providence Health Services. While working for Providence Health Services he was inspired by his executive chef to provide quality dining in a healthcare setting.

During the next 10 years, Heddlesten worked as the executive chef for companies such as The Springs Living, The Goodman Group, and Avamere developing menus that provided high quality restaurant-style dining with an emphasis on new taste experiences and education about global cuisine.

In September 2017 he joined UMD. He loves the area’s outdoor options and relaxed environment. He appreciates “the dedication of the dining staff as they create some of the best food available in Missoula,” he says.

Iden Rodriguez

Iden worked for 15 years at local Missoula restaurants before joining the UMD staff in 2012. He works as a chef in the Food Zoo Dining Hall, though he assists throughout the campus when needed. Rodriguez’s culinary passion is creating slow-cooked foods that keep him in the kitchen all day. He takes particular joy in making his own stocks. When not at work, he spends time with his family and secondary love, music, playing the saxophone, ukulele, and singing.

Stasia Orkwiszewski

Stasia Orkwiszewski, UMD garden manager, manages the two UM Dining gardens as well as the Food Zoo’s microgreen garden. She cares for six ducks and a small orchard at the South Avenue Garden where the dinners took place and keeps bees to produce honey for UM Dining, as well. This honey was used for the September 14 dinner.