



The Art of Cuisine

By Sam K. Saliba, Evie Cuffaro and Hahn Park

Breakfast. Lunch. Dinner. Midnight snack. Repeat.

For most people, this is the routine.

For most people, not much thought goes into the preparation of their next meal.

This story isn't about most people.

This story is about those who live and breathe the culinary craft.

The ones who see an empty plate as a blank canvas with endless possibilities.

This is for anyone who's spent hours obsessing over a single dish, striving for perfection.

This is a story about the artists who paint with hand-crafted sauces and seasonings.

This is a story about the feeling of accomplishment after making a perfectly seasoned meal.

This is a story about putting love and passion into a dish.

This is a story about *The Art of Cuisine*.



Ryan Albin

MAKING FOOD INTO A SCIENCE

“To the Pass!” shouts the head chef the Mercantile restaurant in Denver.

There are flashes of heat everywhere. The Sous Chefs all respond in unison, calling out, “Yes, Chef!” in response, and subsequently return to their tasks, double-time.

A boy in the back of the kitchen hears his name called. The chef needs him to step up to the plate, so to speak. For two days, he is called upon to manage a stage, the task of preparing assorted areas of the kitchen for the rest of the staff. He watches as a culinary ballet plays out in front of him.

Fire flashes before his eyes, pans clatter against stovetops, and before he knows it, Ryan Albin '20 witnesses the heat and sweat and the yelling of the kitchen crescendo into finished plates, one by one.

“Service!” shouts the head chef, the callout signifying the completion of a set of plates.

The front of house staff steps forward, gathering the finalized dishes and bringing them out of the heat and fervor into the kitchen and into the dining room, full of fervent and excited diners. As they cross the threshold separating the kitchen and the dining area, a cool breeze blasts through the door for a brief moment, wafting in the smells and the sounds of the other side.

As the kitchen door closes, the air returns to one of heat and productivity. The effort the entire kitchen staff--and Albin--put in is almost tangible.

As he prepares assorted ingredients, Albin, recalls why he got into cooking in the first place. “Every day, I’d see my mother prep these dishes. It’s all this science, all this preparation. I thought, “This is something I really want to go into.”

And one year later, here he is, preparing ingredients at an award-winning restaurant downtown.

He inherently believes that “I’m telling a story. I’m saying something on a plate that represents something.” Ultimately, this is the same hope or belief that drives any artist to create. The hope that they can communicate whatever’s inside their head through whatever it is they create.

Alex Waschak

SCHOLARSHIPS TURNED DOWN FOR PASSION

Alex Waschak '20 had the opportunity many athletes dream of: the chance to play Division 1 football. He had the chance of a lifetime.

At 6’8” tall and nearly 300 lbs., he towered above his opponents, and after eight years of practicing football, college scouts from all over the country told him he had what it takes to play on the next level.

“For the longest time, I thought I would go into football. The whole point was to do football in college,” he said. “I thought maybe I could go into the NFL.”

For some people, the pursuit of college football pushes them through all four years of high school. For Waschak, however, this wasn’t the case.

He was offered full scholarship to multiple colleges. He turned them all down, and completely changed directions.

Instead of pursuing a football career, he developed an interest in

culinary arts. Constant football practices and intense training gave him inspiration to start cooking. He needed the fuel for his body. A passion for football turned into passion for cooking.

After graduation, he hopes to attend Johnson and Wales, a university specializing in culinary education. After learning the basics at the university, he wants to gain real life experience doing what he loves: cooking.

“I want to venture out into the world, and probably get an apprenticeship in France or Spain or Japan maybe,” he said. “What I would do in Japan is sushi. I would master that for 5 or 10 years. Overall, it’s just learning how to perfect it.”

Using his experience of working under professional chefs, he hopes to open a restaurant of his own, and bring his education of foreign cuisine back to America.

While he isn’t a professional chef yet, Waschak knows his way around a kitchen. Most importantly, he knows how to make food that brings people joy.

“That’s what’s important, the taste,” he said. “If you aren’t having tasty food, then what’s the point? It sounds really basic, but just put love into your food. People can literally taste that, so if you can cook with happiness and joy, it definitely makes a difference.”



Alex’s Apple Rose Tart

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
- 1/4 cups white sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoons salt
- 1/4 stick butter
- 1/3 cups heavy whipping cream
- 3 Granny Smith apples

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees
2. Sift together all purpose flour, white sugar, baking powder, and salt with butter, and mix until crumbly. Set aside.
3. Beat together heavy whipping cream and one egg until combined.
4. Pour wet mixture into dry mixture and lightly mix with a spatula. Make sure it is still crumbly.
5. Pour into 9 inch tart pan and set aside
6. Peel and core Granny Smith apples, and slice into thin half circles. Starting from the outside, arrange them to form a rose pattern.
7. Bake for about 30 minutes, and enjoy!