

SUMMER/FALL, 2018  
FREE-ISSUE No. 1

# gather

by **MHG**

## The Journey to Clef d'Or

The Passionate Hosts:  
In Conversation with Kevin  
& Kathy Murphy

Ian Cheverie creates  
memorable guest experiences  
with warmth and flare

Living the Farm-to-Table Life  
with Chef Kyle Panton



# GAHAN



*The Gahan House*



*Harbourfront*





# HOUSE



*Port City*



*Riverside*

# guest list...

page 9



## Al Doug

**Photographer + Marketing Events Manager**  
Al has been heavily involved in the local music scene from an early age. From playing in his own bands locally and regionally, to promoting and organizing all-ages shows of all genres, he's built a solid level of experience before jumping into the game of major music festivals and events on PEI. He started local and that's where he'll stay.

## Ellen Egan

**Feature Writer + Editor-in-Chief**

An Island gal at heart, Ellen recently traded in her serving apron to pursue a career in writing & publishing. When she's not café hopping with her laptop, she can be found with her nose in a book or eating her way around this beautiful island she's happy to call home.



pages 10,18,22

page 16



## Rod Weatherbie

**Contributor + Associate Concierge**

When not making guests happy at The Great George, Rod enjoys trying new beer, cooking, and spending time with his little boy.

## Tony Davis

**Contributor + Production,  
PEI Brewing Company**

Tony Davis is a journalist and story teller born in Prince Edward Island entering his second year in the journalism program at Holland College. His articles have been featured in The Guardian and The Star Halifax.



page 21

page 27



## Alyssa Wooldridge

**Contributor + Instagram Expert**

As MHG's Social Media Coordinator, Alyssa spends her days writing captions, curating timelines, and creating Insta stories. From our hotels to our restaurants to our breweries, she has the inside scoop...follow along @alyssawool.

## Ian Cheverie

**Contributor + Guest Experience  
Manager & Concierge**

Ian has been part of The Great George team for the past eight years. A PEI native, he loves to share his passion for what he does and where he lives with his guests in the hopes of creating memories that will last a lifetime. See "Ian's Island Tidbits" scattered throughout the issue.



page 10

**FUN**



**ALEX YOULAND**  
Senior Human Resources Manager



**ADAM LOO**  
Director of Culinary Operations

**PASSION**



**JASON DESROCHES**  
MHG Delivered Senior Driver

**GROWTH**



**CHRIS O'KEEFE**  
PEIBC PEI Sales Manager

**QUALITY**



**KATE PUBLICOVER**  
PEIBC Quality Control Coordinator

**FAMILY**



**BEN MURPHY**  
Chief Operations Officer



How many years operational?

**39**  
YEARS

How many staff?  
(Across all locations)



**500 full time**  
**1,000 seasonal**



How many provinces?  
**Hotel locations in 1 province**  
**Restaurant locations in 3 provinces**  
**Beer poured in 6 provinces**



How many beer brands?

**10**  
BEER BRANDS

with many seasonal offerings



How many restaurants total?

**12**   **15**

full service restaurants

food and beverage operations

How many tables served?



**35,000,000**

in 2017

How many beers poured?



**Around 500,000**  
**beers poured a year**



How many hotels?

**2**  
HOTELS

How many overnight guests?



**300,000**  
overnight stays in 2017



It's his/her primary job to build a living environment called **CULTURE**. Creating the environment and nourishing it for people to grow is more important than any technical skill - Seven Secrets of New Age Leadership

# A LEADER IS A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

THESE ARE OUR LEADERS





# OYSTER

# FACTS

## 1. Oysters have a variety of flavour profiles

All oysters have a different flavour profile based on where they were harvested. The same type of oyster can even have a different flavour depending where it was raised. You might even see some oysters being described as cucumber, mushroom or melon in flavour.

## 2. Oysters get their flavours from their environments

Because oysters filter so much water, their flavours will change based on their environment.

## 3. Oysters are rich in vitamins and nutrients

Oysters contain a variety of vitamins and nutrients including zinc, calcium, magnesium, protein, selenium, and vitamin A, B12, iron, and the “good” kind of fat.

## 4. They filter water

Every day, one oyster filters 30 - 50 gallons of water.

## 5. Oysters change their gender

Oysters change their sex during their life, usually starting as males and ending as females. When a female dies, the male will sometimes change to a female, then after laying her eggs, the oyster may change back to a male again.

## 6. Pearls in oysters

We can find pearls in oysters, however, pearls that are used in jewellery come from clams and mussels, not oysters which is a common belief.

## 7. Oysters can live up to 20 years

Oysters are able to spawn in their first year but are at prime spawning size at the age of 3. They begin to ripen with environmental cues such as warmer water.

## 8. We've been eating oysters for thousands of years

Humans have been tendering and eating oysters since at least the time of the Roman Empire.

## 9. Malpeque Oysters

PEI is the only place in the world where the Malpeque oyster is cultivated and 10 million are harvested annually on Prince Edward Island.

## 10. The “R” Policy

At one time, people believed you should only eat oysters during the months that had “r” in them. This is not true... oysters are good all year ‘round so slurp away!



# SUMMER SHOWS NOT TO MISS

BY AL DOUGLAS

**ALL SUMMER LONG:** If It's Alright With You at the PEI Brewing Company is a beautiful story of a father and daughter connection unlike anything we've seen before. Starting July 9th and running every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday in July, August and September, Catherine MacLellan gives background, history, anecdotes, and stories about her Dad, Gene MacLellan, and performs the hits along with lesser known tracks in her own voice.

**JULY 10 - SEPTEMBER 8:** Now in its second year, Atlantic Blue tells the funny, beautiful and heart-wrenching stories of the great iconic songwriters from the region. Using film to tell the life stories of these brilliant writers and songs to illustrate their work, PEI-born veteran of the stage Tara MacLean takes the audience on a journey into the past. It runs Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday nights at The Guild in Charlottetown.

**FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS AT NEXT DOOR PATIO:** Every week we'll have a DJ spinning tunes to get your night started the right way from 7pm-10pm. No cover! Grab a comfy chair or challenge a pal to a game of giant Connect Four.

**AUGUST 2:** Reuben and the Dark at Fishbones—a night at Fishbones for the books! Something a bit more chill for your summer vibes on Vic Row. All the way from Calgary, Alberta Advanced tickets recommended.

**AUGUST 19:** Christina Martin at The Trailside Cafe will be a doozy as this multi-award winning Canadian singer-songwriter graces us with her presence. Her style has been described as an “effortless union between Americana and Rock” and will pair perfectly with the Trailside's intimate atmosphere.

**AUGUST 25:** Art in the Open is hands-down one of the best days in the city. Charlottetown's downtown core and green spaces are transformed into this incredible contemporary arts festival with a mixture of installations, performance art, screenings, dance, theatre, you name it.

**AUGUST 30:** Baby God + Owen Meany's Batting Stance show at The Trailside Cafe will surely knock your socks off. Baby God (Andrew Murray and Nathan Gill) is a charming mess of indie rock, alt-country and folk, while Owen Meany's Batting Stance is a Halifax-based alternative indie rock project of songwriter Daniel Walker.

**AUGUST 31 - SEPTEMBER 30 :** September is becoming more and more my favourite month for good eatin' as The PEI Fall Flavours Festival gives us no shortage of amazing food experiences to take in all month long. A few of my personal favourites are PEI Beer Fest (Sept. 21-22), The Great Big BBQ with Chef Corbin (Sept. 26), and the always-popular Farm Day in the City (Sept. 30). This is the finale to the festival and brings everyone and their dog out (literally, it's amazing) for a day of eating, drinking, and shopping while supporting our local farmers and artisans. What's not to love?

Ian's Island  
Tidbits

FEEL THE LOCAL BEAT

No. 001

- Ross Family Ceilidh in Stanley Bridge
- The Indian River Festival in Kensington
- The Trailside Cafe in Mount Stewart
- Tara MacLean's Atlantic Blue: A Celebration of East Coast Songwriters at The Guild

# Ian. Cheverie

creates memorable guest experiences  
with warmth and flare at  
The Great George

By Ellen Egan

Ian Cheverie lives by the motto:  
*The answer is yes, what is the question?*

Not everyone is fortunate enough to find a job that allows them to be their most authentic self, to be excited about going to work each day, and to go above and beyond to be of service to others.

Ian oozes passion for his work and is one such person who has carved out his own niche as the Guest Experience Manager & Concierge at The Great George hotel in the historic district of downtown Charlottetown.

"It's not uncommon in this company for people to really be empowered and have the freedom and flexibility that I have to create my own job," says Ian, who kindly sits down with me in late May, just before the hotel's busy season begins. "I constantly say I have the best job in the company. I just get to create, innovate — no two days are the same, really."

But beyond the impressive architecture, tasteful decor, and ideal location (just steps from many of the city's finest restaurants and landmarks), I can't help but wonder what exactly it is that makes The Great George experience so special.

As I ask him this question from an oversized leather chair in the hotel's lobby, I suddenly feel as though Ian and I are two old friends about to catch up over fine scotch and Cuban cigars.





"We describe that we are designed around the senses and it's true," he says, as I snap back to reality. "We make the smell impeccable, the taste impeccable, anything visual is impeccable... we like to think we are in the memory-making, emotional transportation business because that's what travellers are looking for now."

If Ian loves anything more than making a guest's stay the best it can be, it's his home province of Prince Edward Island.

"This Island is special. It really is. Let's be real—and this is not biased—there's no better place in the world than PEI in the summertime," he says. "People come here to cross it off their life bucket lists, and we get to be a part of it? How can you not feel passionate about that? Yeah, we're pretty blessed."

Indeed, Ian's enthusiasm is palpable and his energy contagious, so it's not surprising that he creates long standing connections with each guest who walks through their doors.

**"We're all Island ambassadors, we're selling Prince Edward Island through The Great George so I'm definitely proud of where I'm from, where I work, and what we do is evident with our guests," he explains.**

"We're about as big a part of a guest's visit to PEI as the beaches, the culinary, and the proof is in the amount of letters we get from guests that say things like, *Ian, did you get that dog you always wanted?* We are not forgotten... it's highly rewarding."

With a background in theatre, Ian specializes in storytelling and even created a guided walking tour for their guests to enjoy that tells the history of Charlottetown.

"That was a game changer from just being a hotel to an experiential provider," he says. "So with that walking tour, I get a taste of theatre every day and this hour-long tour sometimes turns into an hour and a half, to two hours. It's a wonderful way to build friendships with our guests."

It's this sort of deeply ingrained passion that brought Ian on the path of becoming PEI's first and only Les Clefs d'Or Concierge—or The Golden Keys, as it's commonly known.

It all started about three years ago, Ian says, after he made an impact on the Regional Clef d'Or Director from Atlantic Canada during a Valentine's Day stay at the hotel with his girlfriend.

"I didn't know who he was, but I knew he was a concierge from a hotel in Halifax," explains Ian. "So I wrote him a personal card, put a little gift in his room—and he sent me an email after, so that is really what introduced me to the Clef d'Or. I had no idea what it was before that."

Basically, it's a society of Hotel Concierges across the world whose aim is to facilitate the exchange of ideas between their members and provide mutual assistance in order to better service their guests.

Anyone who has seen movies like *The Grand Budapest Hotel* or *Pretty Woman* might recognize the golden keys pinned on each of the concierge's lapels.

Though honoured by the invitation, Ian says it was still a serious decision whether or not to go through the rigorous two-year process. But backed by the full support of Kevin Murphy and the hotel's then General Manager, Rachel Vidito, he ultimately decided to go for it.

"We have a lot of shared values, like keeping positive relationships, understanding that we exist for the guest, spreading our passion for our industry with today's youth, and striving to continuously offer the best possible experience that you can," he says.

He built a lot of great connections during the process and received his keys in December 2017. Since then it's only added to the high quality of service he's able to offer.



"It's a win-win for me...and yes, I know PEI tip-to-tip, but now if I find out someone is going to Montreal, and they want to go to a restaurant with a great wine cellar, and let's say a spa with different water treatments, I'll get in touch with Gerry at the Hotel Intercontinental and ask him those questions, and within a moment those guests have that answer. What a WOW factor!"

He now wears his keys with pride each and every day.

**"My posture gets a little bit better every time I put them on."**

No. 002

## Ian's Island Tidbits

### EXPLORE OUR COASTAL DRIVES

#### GREEN GABLES SHORE :

Breathtaking views in the Rustico Bay region, the rolling hills in New Glasgow, and the highest point with red cliffs between Malpeque and French River

#### RED SANDS SHORE :

The Peace & Tranquility Drive  
Incredible churches, countless water inlets, and some of the most 'purely coastal' driving than any other coastal drive

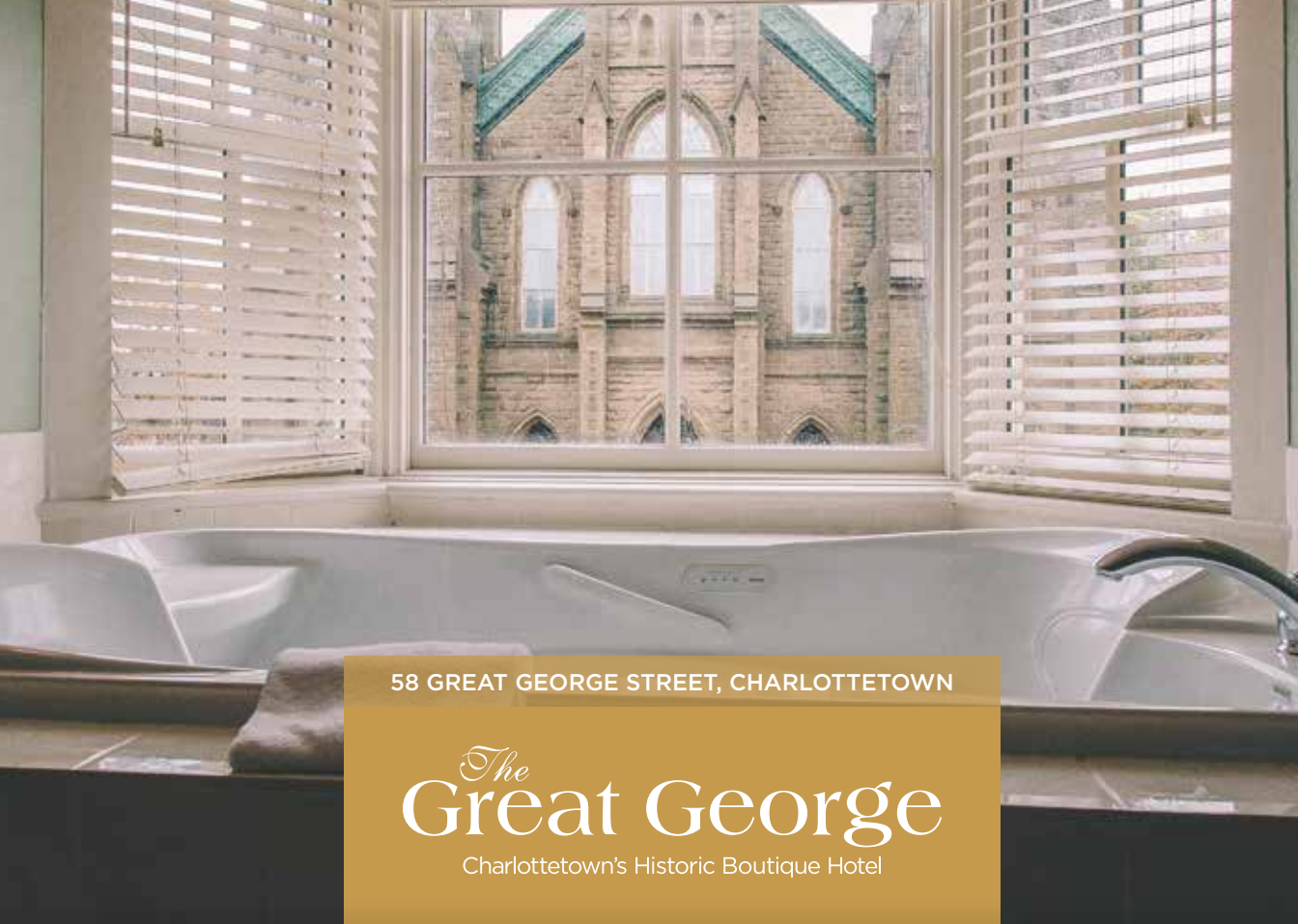
OYSTER BED BRIDGE

MHGPEI.COM

# ULTIMATE CHEF'S TABLE

*the RiverShed*  
EVENTS CENTRE

EXPERIENCE PEI IN FIVE COURSES JULY 4TH • JULY 18TH • AUGUST 1ST • AUGUST 15TH • AUGUST 29TH



58 GREAT GEORGE STREET, CHARLOTTETOWN

*The*  
**Great George**  
Charlottetown's Historic Boutique Hotel



*the* **Hotel on Pownal**

146 POWNAL STREET, CHARLOTTETOWN





*Sims Corner*  
STEAKHOUSE & OYSTER BAR

86 Queen Street, Charlottetown



**THE**  
**BRICKHOUSE**  
KITCHEN & BAR

**125 SYDNEY STREET**  
CHARLOTTETOWN



# BECOMING A CICERONE.

## A beer sommelier.

That sounded good to me. I was reading an article in *The Globe and Mail* about craft beer and the reporter interviewed a woman who said she was a Cicerone; a beer sommelier.

I have a number of friends in the industry that are sommeliers and while I like wine, I'm content to rely on their expertise when it comes to wine in all its glorious varieties.

But beer is something I can get behind. It's something I've always been interested in. From early trips to the UK with family where the drinking age seemed more like a vague suggestion rather than a law, to bartending, to a brief relationship with home brewing, I find beer fascinating.

It's one of the earliest products made by humans (along with bread; same ingredients) that required more than just slapping meat on fire. The endless flavours and aromas that can be coaxed out of the same four ingredients are amazing. A lager, a stout, and a Lambic are three very different beers, but all use (essentially) water, malted barley/wheat, yeast, and hops.

I decided I could be a Cicerone. And I may be by the time this piece is published. I say this provisionally as the pass rate is 25% and the passing grade is 80%.

The work I've done towards this has been enlightening to say the least. I love learning about beer. One of the many areas that you have to be proficient in is pairings.

Here are some of my recommendations:

**LOBSTER** - It's not PEI summer without a lobster dinner. One thing visitors to the East Coast notice is that we traditionally eat our lobster in the shell cold. There is nothing wrong with hot lobster, but that's just the way we roll.

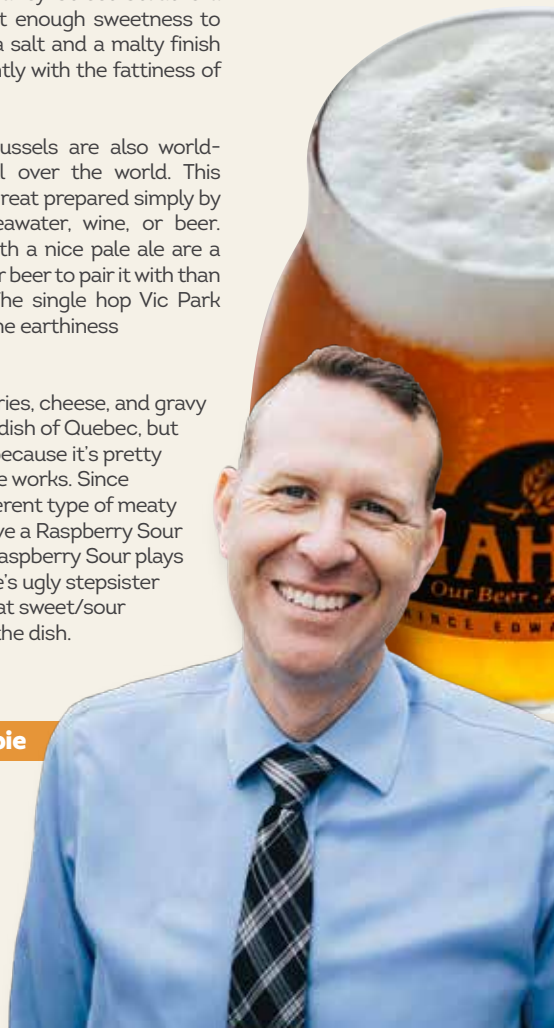
Because of lobster's delicate taste, it's best to pair with a lightly hopped beer. Beach Chair Lager is a nicely balanced drink with just a little hop bitterness and light biscuit malt flavour. A great match for a hot day on the deck.

**OYSTERS** - Prince Edward Island produces some of the world's best oysters. From Colville Bay to Cooke's Cove, almost every inlet and estuary in PEI offers a version of our world famous Malpeque oyster. Whether you like your oyster raw or cooked, you need a drink that can balance the deep saltiness of the mollusc. Stout is a traditional pairing for oysters and I'm not going to break with convention here. Sydney Street Stout is a nice companion; just enough sweetness to complement the sea salt and a malty finish that finishes pleasantly with the fattiness of the fish.

**MUSSELS** - Our mussels are also world-famous; shipped all over the world. This hardy little beast is great prepared simply by just steaming in seawater, wine, or beer. Mussels steamed with a nice pale ale are a treat and what better beer to pair it with than Vic Park Pale Ale. The single hop Vic Park adds nice citrus to the earthiness of the mussel.

**POUTINE** - French fries, cheese, and gravy is really the national dish of Quebec, but Islanders took to it because it's pretty close to fries with the works. Since poutine offers a different type of meaty saltiness, I like to have a Raspberry Sour with it. Visually the Raspberry Sour plays Cinderella to poutine's ugly step-sister and the beer is a great sweet/sour foil to the umami of the dish.

By Rod Weatherbie



Pizza is arguably the world's greatest food, and although you can get it delivered to your door, nothing beats a homemade pizza. So here's my go-to recipe for making it at home. It takes very little time to set up but a long time for it to rise (18-24 hours), so you'll have to plan a day ahead for this tasty number.

Mix water, sugar, and yeast together and let it sit until it becomes frothy, about 5 minutes. Meanwhile in a large bowl, mix the flour and yeast together. When the yeast is ready, add it and the olive oil to the flour and yeast mixture, and mix with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon until they combine. Don't worry about how it looks, just as long as it's all combined together you'll be golden.

Now, wrap it tightly with plastic wrap and let it rest on your counter for 18 to 24 hours. When you're ready to make your pizza, roll out your dough on a lightly floured surface, cut into two, and roll into balls. Then cover it with a tea cloth and let it rest for 15 minutes.

Next, prep your oven by moving your oven racks. Put one as low as it can go, and move the other one as high as it can go. Then preheat your oven to 450°F.

While you wait for the dough to finish resting, you can make the no-bake pizza sauce in just a few minutes. Add your sauce ingredients to a food processor or blender, and blend until smooth.

Now back to the dough. Once it's ready to be flattened out, place a ball on a flour surface and flatten it with a rolling pin. Place your dough on a floured pizza pan—I like to use semolina flour, but regular flour will work.

**Making Your Pizza:** Add pizza sauce to your dough and add whatever toppings you'd enjoy. I like cooked hot Italian sausage, green pepper, onion, and lots of cheese.

Time to cook! Place your pizza on the very bottom rack and cook for 4-5 minutes (until the bottom of your dough is a little brown), then move it to the top rack of your oven and cook for 4-5 more minutes until your cheese is melted.

*Easy-peasy! Enjoy.*

bar1911  
BEER + COFFEE



# NO KNEAD Pizza Dough & A NO COOK Pizza Sauce

BY CHEF PETER MILLER

## Dough

- 3 CUPS ALL PURPOSE FLOUR
- 1/4 TEASPOON YEAST
- 1 1/4 TEASPOON SALT
- 1/4 TEASPOON SUGAR
- 2 TABLESPOON OLIVE OIL
- 1 1/2 CUPS WARM WATER

## Sauce

- 1 400ML CAN OF PLUM TOMATOES
- 4 TABLESPOONS OLIVE OIL
- 1 GARLIC CLOVE
- 2 TEASPOON DRIED OREGANO
- 1/2 TEASPOON SALT





THE  
*Passionate*  
HOSTS

KEVIN & KATHY MURPHY INFUSE GENUINE ISLAND  
HOSPITALITY INTO EVERYTHING THEY DO

*By Ellen Egan*

Many people know Kevin and Kathy Murphy as the entrepreneurial minds behind the Murphy Hospitality Group here on Prince Edward Island. But what many may not know is that they started their company from very humble beginnings.

Since acquiring their first restaurant back in 1980, they've quite literally built their company up brick by brick, detail by detail, smile by smile—and with a whole lot of love and hard work.

I recently had the chance to chat with them about what fuels their fire after 38 years in business and striving to push the envelope each and every day.

As we settle into wingback chairs in one of the many elegant suites at The Great George hotel, complete with views overlooking the stunning St. Dunstan's Basilica, Kevin explains that it really all starts with having a passion for the hospitality business.

***“I think you either love it or you don't. I love the business. Even when I was a bartender in university, I loved that job, serving people,” he says. “This is not something you can fake. With us, it's real— we really like doing it.”***

Even though they now have 15 food and beverage operations, two boutique hotels, and the Prince Edward Island Brewing Company, they both agree they didn't really have a grand plan in the beginning.



“We had no idea it was going to get to this level,” says Kathy, whose creative magic and warmth can be felt in each of MHG’s spaces. “I was in nursing and Kevin was doing his thing [in the financial sector], and then bought The Barn and it just kind of started from there.”

At the root of it all is their love for taking care of people. She recalls how even when their children were young, they had a backyard rink where she says everyone would gather in the wintertime.

“I guess we’ve been doing it all our lives, right?” says Kathy. “It’s probably just in us because we both love to host, we both come from big families, and love being around a lot of people, taking care of them. It’s in everything we do.”

This passion for serving others has trickled down to their kids as well: “They’re all still working in the company,” she says. “They have a great sense of family and home, even if they’ve lived away for a while.”

Kevin agrees. “They’re very good at what they do, and we’re so fortunate to have that. Ben’s running things and Sam and Isaac, you can put them anywhere and they can run a place, it’s very natural. They’ve got the passion.”

Another key piece to their success is their constant desire to grow and change. Whether it’s on the culinary front with new menu ideas or unique design concepts for a space, the couple is always looking for fun, innovative ideas, especially when they travel.

In fact, they say they often find themselves wondering: *Would that work in PEI?*

It’s this sort of mindset that got them where they are today. While Kevin is a big picture, “getter-done” type and Kathy prefers the creative, more detail-oriented aspects of the business, they both agree it’s their opposing strengths that make it work so well.

“We’re polar opposites when it comes to that stuff,” explains Kevin. “But I know with Kathy at the end of the day it’s going to be warm and comfortable and different, and people are gonna go, ‘Wow!’ She’s really good at what she does.”

For Kathy, she’s all about curating pieces she loves, building something new, and seeing the end result. Indeed, she doesn’t often leave home without her trusty measuring tape.

“I’m not creating something from nothing, I’m just taking everything I love and creating something,” she says. “I’m very visual, so any place that I go into, if I like something, I just measure it and take a picture of it—and there might be a place for it somewhere down the road.”

Beyond the funky paint colours and statement light fixtures you’ll find in their spaces, they say the success of MHG is built on having a strong company culture. This means living it every day and hiring the right people who are equally as passionate about what they do.



“It comes back to the people we hire in senior positions, they understand what MHG is all about and operate under our core values. We call it the “it” factor,” says Kevin. “So it’s not just one thing, it’s everything. And it starts with making sure they’re a fit when we hire them.”

It’s not all about taking care of others either. They know they have to take care of themselves to stay on top of their game, too. So in addition to working out, practicing yoga, and meditating, they both agree that one of the biggest things they’re able to do now is let go and let their people do their job.

“We have great, genuine people, and they’ve got a vibe and a coolness. They’re building the culture,” says Kevin. “Our head office is 25-30 year olds, which is crazy to think, but our industry is a young industry and we love working with them—it keeps us young.”

He adds: ***“We don’t take it too seriously. We don’t work too hard. It’s all fun work, and it’s really about balancing it and making sure to enjoy what you’re doing.”***

I suppose it doesn’t hurt that PEI is one of the most laid back places to live and do business either.

“PEI is unique, we hear it all the time,” says Kevin. “People say, ‘it’s different here, it’s quieter, it’s slower.’ And they’re right. We often take it for granted. We’ve been fortunate enough to be able to do business and really enjoy this industry... there was no other option but PEI.”

Kathy agrees. ***“We were born here, we’ll die here. This will always be home.”***

## THE *Passionate* HOSTS

### MHG’S CORE VALUES

**FAMILY PASSION GROWTH QUALITY FUN**



**MHG**  
*Delivered*

Your favourites direct to your door.





Nothing beats sneaking off to the beach on a hot PEI evening and sipping a cold beer as the sun sets over our white sands. But what's the perfect summer beer? Let's consider our options.

Rix Light Craft Lager, for one, is quickly becoming a beach-goer's favourite. Named after William Rix, an entrepreneur who opened PEI's first modern brewery in 1984, this crisp beer is easy-drinking with a dry finish.

Chris Long is the Head Brewer at the PEI Brewing Company. I asked him what makes this beer so satisfying. "It has a lot less sugar than other beers," he said. With less sugar in the beer, there is less alcohol in the final product.

Rix also has higher carbonation than other craft beer and the low sugar content makes it easy to drink. "It has a snappy finish," Long said. "Corn was added to dry Rix out. The dryness is usually what people are talking about when they say a beer is crisp."

Beach Chair Lager is another great light lager that goes down smoothly on a scorching summer day. "Beach Chair has a lot of malt in it. It has slightly more sugar and more alcohol, but is still easy to drink," Long said.

With the temperatures heating up rapidly, it's easy to reach for a Beach Chair and embrace these dog days of summer.

And if you're looking to mix up the pallet, try a classic Blueberry Wheat Ale. Made with locally sourced all-natural blueberry puree, the natural flavouring sets Blueberry apart from other flavoured craft beers on the market. Many of which are made with extracts and artificial flavours.

Whatever your taste buds desire, reach for one of these refreshing beers and you can finish off (or start) any summer day with something just right for you.

# YOUR SUMMER BEER FIX



BY TONY DAVIS





# CHEF KYLE PANTON

## Shares His Story Of Living The Farm-to-Table Life

• • • BY ELLEN EGAN • • •

Whether it's the gentle waft of freshly baked biscuits from your grandmother's kitchen or cutting into that medium rare ribeye you've been thinking about all week, we can all relate to having those experiences with food that bring us back to a specific time, place, and feeling.

Food memories are like that. Because you're not just using your taste or even just your sight, but all your senses together that add layers of richness to the overall experience.

If anyone knows the power of creating and telling food stories, it's Chef Kyle Panton of Belfast, Prince Edward Island.

Not only is he one of the Island's finest homegrown chefs, at 30 he's won numerous prestigious cooking awards and is the Executive Chef at Sims Corner Steakhouse & Oyster Bar, as well as The Brickhouse Kitchen & Bar—both located just footsteps from each other in downtown Charlottetown.

I catch up with Kyle at Sims on a sunny Monday afternoon, one of the only days of the week you won't find him in the kitchen.

As we settle into plush leather stools at the wine bar, Kyle sips his coffee and asks about my grandmother, a neighbour of his growing up: "What did she used to burn in her house, was it cinnamon and cloves?"

I can't say for sure, but I smile knowingly as I'm instantly transported back to the old white farmhouse on Pinette Road.

"Whatever it was, when you walked in to get eggs, that was what you smelled. And I still remember that smell! So that's a food story," explains Kyle.

### A DOWN TO EARTH APPROACH

Kyle is no stranger to getting his hands dirty. He grew up working on farms in his community, fishing in nearby rivers, and watching his mother, Irene, cook and bake in their family home.

"Then when I was about 15, I started washing dishes at my mother's restaurant," he says. "I eventually started cooking and that's what really got me thinking that maybe this was what I wanted to do."

It wasn't long before his vision began to take shape. After high school, Kyle attended the Culinary Institute of Canada in Charlottetown. He then apprenticed in Toronto under David Lee of Nota Bene and Victor Berry of the formerly known restaurant, Splendido.

Once he'd had a taste for cooking under pressure at a high level, he was hooked.

Kyle didn't last very long away from the Island, however. He returned home to finish his second year of culinary school where he would eventually meet Craig MacMillan, the operating partner of Sims Corner, which opened in 2007.

"I didn't know who he was at the time, but he was in my class and I ended up helping him

along a bit,” says Kyle. “At the end of it he told me he was opening a restaurant, Sims Corner, where I was later hired after working at the school for a little while.”

That was nearly 10 years ago. Since then, he’s been passionate about promoting PEI food, creating memorable culinary experiences, and pushing his career to the next level.

## **EMBRACING THE FLAVOURS OF PEI**

The young chef credits much of his success at Sims to creating dishes from the wealth of PEI’s incredible ingredients, like PEI beef, which comes from farmers who feed their cattle a diet consisting of only potatoes and grain. It’s then butchered in-house at Sims and is aged for a minimum of 45 days to ensure maximum flavour.

“Since we got our steak program going, PEI beef has taken off all across the country, and it’s starting to spread into other parts of the world, too,” he says. “For the first little while we never even thought to talk about it because it’s just what we did, right? But now we know we have to tell that story.”

Of course, the selection of locally sourced products on their menu doesn’t stop at PEI beef.

***“We’re on an island that produces great vegetables, great meats, great shellfish—we actually have it all right here in our back pockets,” Kyle says. “We can literally call up the fisherman, call him by name, and he drops the oysters off at the back door. That’s pretty special. Most places in the world can’t do that.”***

As part of the Murphy Hospitality Group, he explains that Sims is one of 16 food and beverage operations that have the capacity to set a steady trend in buying local for other restaurants across the Island.

“Because we make up such a big part of the culinary scene here, we believe we have the chance to swing the turns a little,” he says. “We understand that buying local and supporting everybody is a big part of it, because if you don’t have someone raising

your food or making your food, then you’re not going to have any food.”

## **RETURNING TO HIS FARMING ROOTS**

Kyle takes this responsibility to heart, especially since he realized another one of his dreams about five years ago when he started his own produce farm with his cousin, Curtis Penny, called One Vision Farms.

“There’s lots of people like me, that are small and have their own little farm,” he explains. “We want to use different farmers and it pushes each other, so it’s good and creates healthy competition.”

If there’s anything Kyle loves more than food, it’s his family. His wife, Vanessa, is also a key player on their farm, and they have two young children, a three-year-old and a one-year-old.

“Just teaching them about food and seeing them develop is really what drives me now as an adult, as a dad, to make sure that they understand what food is about and why I cook,” he says. “I used to cook because I thought I loved cooking, but now I cook because I want everyone else to love cooking, too.”

## **A BRAND NEW CULINARY EXPERIENCE**

Beyond the kitchen and the field, Kyle is raising his culinary game in other ways, too. He’s especially excited about a new five-course meal he’s hosting this summer with different guests from the company, including other chefs, sommeliers, and brewers. It’s called The Ultimate Chef’s Table and takes place at the beautiful RiverShed in Oyster Bed Bridge.

Based on the concept from a successful Fall Flavours event he ran with Chef Corbin of Ontario last year, he’s looking forward to the challenge of hosting 50 people and coming up with a different locally inspired PEI menu for each event.

“It’s something new and different that I haven’t done yet, so that’ll help me grow in my own shoes. But that’s what we love—that’s what we live for.”





ULTIMATE  
**CHEF'S TABLE**  
*the RiverShed*  
EVENTS CENTRE

**AUGUST 1ST:** Chef Adam Loo (Murphy Hospitality Group, Culinary Operations Manager) & Rod Weatherbie (The Great George Hotel + studying Cicerone)

**AUGUST 15TH:** Chef Andrew Cotton (Merchantman Fresh Seafood & Oyster Bar, Head Chef) & Darren LeBlanc (Merchantman Fresh Seafood & Oyster Bar Sommelier)

**AUGUST 29TH:** Chef Lincoln Key (MRG Catering & Events + PEI Brewing Company, Head Chef) & Chris Long (PEI Brewing Company, Head Brewer)

**SEPTEMBER 27TH:** A Signature Fall Flavours Event with Chef Kyle Panton and Chef Corbin (Food Network)

**EACH EVENT RUNS 6:00PM - 9:30PM / TICKET PRICES START AT \$115,**  
plus tax and gratuity and includes a 5-course meal with drink pairings.

**No. 003**

**Ian's Island**  
*Tidbits*

**SPECIAL DISCOVERIES**

- St. Peters Harbour Lighthouse
- Cape Tryon Lighthouse
- Victoria-by-the-Sea
- Rossignol Winery
- College of Piping
- Village Pottery



Beach Chair  
*Lager*



**MERCHANT**  
FRESH SEAFOOD **MAN** OYSTER BAR

23 QUEEN ST, CHARLOTTETOWN



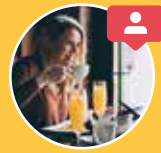
# bar1911

BEER + COFFEE

113 Longworth Avenue







# *Creating memorable experiences ...* **ON INSTAGRAM**

## *Pick Your Three Things*

What are three things that define you? For some, it's food, family and travel. For others, it's dogs, selfies and interior design. Decide what three things are most important to you and use them as the foundation of your content creation.

## *Find Your Voice*

There are all different kinds of captions: informative, story-telling, funny, heartwarming, short and sweet. Think about how you talk IRL and make sure your online voice matches. As much as social media is all about presenting the best version of yourself, authenticity is key as well.

## *Take Your Photos*

The nicer the pics, the more 'likes' you'll get! Don't worry about rushing out to get a fancy camera—some of the nicest accounts out there feature iPhone photos only.

## *Be Creative*

Anyone can post a picture of their morning coffee, but only you can post a picture of your morning coffee with a caption about your favourite barista who remembers your drink order every time. Before you post, always ask yourself: "How can I talk about this from my unique point of view?"

**Creating your ultimate Instagram feed simply comes down to telling your story in a visual way. You know the stories you tell at the end of the day while you're recapping all your adventures? Figure out how you can tell that same story in a picture, a thoughtful caption, and then post away!**

*Alyssa Woodbridge*

Grab a  
Chair!



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