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gather

by **MHG**

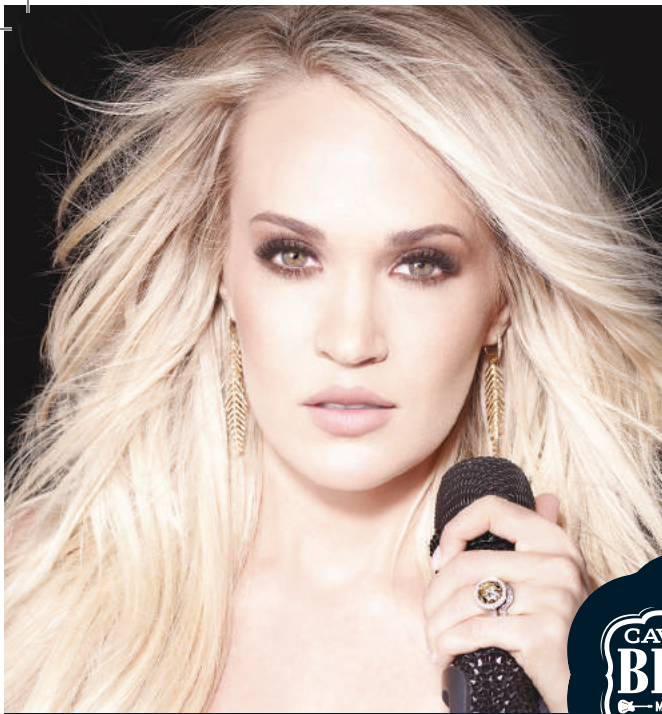
It's All About The People

Culinary Excellence
with Chef Adam Loo

Rachel Vidito on Cultivating
a Vibrant Company Culture

Expanding MHG
Across the Maritimes

MURPHY HOSPITALITY GROUP



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ELLEN EGAN
EDITOR - IN - CHIEF



Letter from the *EDITOR*

Of course, each edition of Gather wouldn't be complete without shining the spotlight on one of our talented chefs. Read about Chef Adam Loo, our Culinary Operations Manager, and his inspiring journey from farm to table - and everywhere in between - on page 5.

No matter where you're reading this from, we hope you settle in and enjoy this brand new issue.

Cheers!
Ellen

KEVIN MURPHY
PRESIDENT



Note from the *PUBLISHER*

Hi friends,

Welcome to our second edition of Gather!

Whether you're bellied up at one of our bars or just checking in to your hotel room after a long journey, we invite you to take a moment just for you, right now. Hey, maybe even take a deep breath - I bet it's been a while.

As you flip through these pages, you'll soon notice we love our people more than words can say (though we try to put it into words), and hope you enjoy getting to know us from the inside out.

Like our Chief Culture Officer, Rachel Vidito, who bravely graces our cover and is just one of those people who warms up every room she enters. Find out what keeps her rocking on page 16.

We also unravelled what it takes to expand MHG across the Northumberland Strait - the good, the bad, and the downright "foolish" as Ben Murphy, our Chief Operating Officer, so eloquently puts it (page 29).

Our company started over 38 years ago, my wife Kathy and I ran our first location. We were the dishwashers, we were the hosts. Now our company encompasses 13 restaurant locations, six breweries, and two hotel properties. We are a family company with my three sons: Ben, Sam & Isaac, all very involved in our day-to-day operations.

Our continued growth and passion for this industry has made us a major player in the food and hospitality sector in Atlantic Canada. We will never forget what has brought us here... our commitment to our guests and our people.

As a company, we're also committed to the sustainability of the food industry and our MHG family. We pride ourselves on being local ambassadors for our great province of PEI and we're delighted that you picked up this magazine and are interested in all that we do.

Remember... Dream big, work hard, and have a beer!

Kevin & Kathy Murphy

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Culinary Excellence

LESSONS
IN LIFE AND
FOOD WITH
CHEF ADAM LOO

By *Ellen Egan*
Photography by *Al Douglas*



Chef Adam Loo is undoubtedly a powerhouse when it comes to creating and executing really great food. But what many may not know is that his passion for cooking stemmed from one simple thing: his love for eating cookies and baking them with his grandmother.

Like many Islanders, Adam fondly recalls spending much of his childhood playing on his family's farm, just outside of Kensington, PEI. And as the son of the late Raymond Loo, one of PEI's most well-known organic farmers, he credits his father to helping shape many of his fundamental beliefs and values about life, business, and food.

It's not surprising then that Adam has carved a career in the culinary world. A graduate of the Culinary Institute of Canada, he's done everything from competing at the Culinary Olympics all around the world, to apprenticing at The Sagamore, a prestigious Four-Diamond restaurant in New York, to landing his first job as a head chef in Georgetown, PEI, all before the age of 20.

Over the past decade, he's worked in nearly all of the Murphy Hospitality Group's kitchens in Charlottetown and today, the young chef shares his passion and strengths day in and day out as the Culinary Operations Manager. It's a seemingly perfect fit that allows him to combine his years of cooking and management experience, strong work ethic, and dedication to the culinary arts.

Curious to find out what's shaped his culinary journey and where his passion and drive stems from, we sat down to chat over coffee in late fall. Here's a distilled version of our conversation.

EE: What was your first real venture in the food business?



Adam's late father,
Raymond Loo, on the
family's organic farm

AL: My dad oversaw everything I did, but he let me create my first business when I was about nine and make my own money. So I actually started off selling handmade dog biscuits, and my stepmother and my father would help me make them. We would package them in baggies and take them to the Farmer's Market in Kensington to sell for about a dollar a bag. I also had an interest in video games, but the rule in my house was they would never buy us video games. I had to make my money to get the video games. So when I was younger, it was about making cookies and then it was about getting video games - it was about getting the things I wanted, so to speak, but I had to work for it.



EE: Who (or what) has made the biggest impact on your career?

AL: Loyalty has always been a strong value in my family. And I grew up having timeless mentors that taught me so much about discipline and there are so many different life lessons that have happened throughout the years. My father passed away five years ago, which was a very big event in our family's lives, and in the community's lives. My father was very well-respected and well-known, and he lives on as a legacy. He taught me so much - he was in my day-to-day life and had a huge interest in the food industry.

EE: I've heard you talk about reaching a breaking point in your "busy" lifestyle. Tell me about that.

AL: I was in a situation about 10 years ago where I felt like I lived to work, that was my life. I was working way more than I should have and wanted to be the one doing everything. But over time, you can only miss so many weddings, birthdays, Christmases, and Thanksgivings - those things in your life that really matter. Until finally one day you wake up and realize you're missing out on a lot of things. Then I reached a breaking point about six years ago when my father first got sick, because everything just hit all of a sudden. Those times where you think, *That's fine, I'll go next year*. All of a sudden, boom, that opportunity is gone. I realized something needed to change and that the industry might not change for us unless we do something about it. I wanted to contribute in a positive way for change to happen, and I wanted to do that with our team.

EE: How did you implement this change and how do you encourage a healthy work-life balance within your teams?

AL: So we went back, literally, to the drawing board with what we were doing with Merchantman at the time. There's a lot to it, but the first thing we realized was that we need to hire people who understand that they work to live. I can't convince anybody that there's a reason why you should want to be off. I don't care what that is, but you have to have a want, an interest, outside of what you're doing. It's very hard to convince people to want to do that if they don't already. But I think the generations are changing, and people are coming into the workforce now with that mindset already. We also took a look at our roles - everything from prep work to line work - and streamlined a lot of our processes so people, myself included, weren't working crazy hours anymore and began alleviating a lot of unnecessary stress.

EE: What caused you to shift from cooking to taking on more of a role in culinary operations?

AL: I've always had a huge interest in operations and I actually took the applied degree of Culinary Operations (which is no longer offered) after my Culinary Arts degree. I've felt that the culinary world, the business side of it, is very complex. You're basically taking an art form, the culinary arts, and then applying business tactics. If you think about how chefs' brains work, and their interests and their passions, they come from the artistic world. But to understand the demands of the business, as it continues to grow and change, and your labour cost and your food cost, you have to have strong mathematical IQ. There are so many other pieces now that are demanded of the chefs, so I work with a lot of chefs now and I get the opportunity to do that every day with all of our very talented kitchen teams.

EE: What is your management style like?

AL: When I was young as a manager, I didn't have the life experience to help mold me into a manager, so I would compare it a lot to the sports world. No matter if you're on the basketball court or in the middle of service in a kitchen, when things start to get tough, the first thing that goes every time is communication. People stop talking. And then all of a sudden, the dynamic changes. Communication is number one for me. Just say it. Even if things seem obvious, it's always worth checking in.

Over time, I've also learned it's better to ask questions rather than telling people everything. I completely shifted my tone, I'd say, "What do you think? How would you make this better?" Because when you have a loyal team that's there for the same purpose, I believe everybody will be committed to making things better and easier. They just need some support and they need to know they have somebody they can lean on if they need to.

I've never been a proponent of micromanaging either. If someone feels like there's somebody over their shoulder, they're not able to be creative. Remember, we're working with artists here. They need to have the creative mindset, they need to have the canvas to work on, so to speak. We're always looking at our lines to see



“Communication is number one for me. Just say it.”

EE: How do you create a more cohesive work environment?

if there's ways we can help them do their jobs better.

AL: I've always said, it's this simple: when you walk into work, all I'm asking is to say "Hello" to the people that you're working with. If everybody in our company (and outside of our company) did that one simple gesture, it would change the dynamic so easily. It's inherent respect that when you walk into a room, you say "Hello" to the other person. Because those two or three people who are working on the line, they could be having a rough day. Or maybe they're having a great day and they could pick you up. You walk in and you say, "Hello," and they say, "Hey, how are you doing? Good to see you." And all of a sudden, you feel a little bit better, versus walking in and having no interaction - you're stuck in the unknown. It feels so simple to say, but it is a commitment. I'm also a firm believer that it always comes back to who you surround yourself with, it always comes back to the people you have on your teams.

It's amazing what a strong vision, great leadership, and a team of dedicated people can do. What started out as a big dream for a simple cow pasture in Cavendish, Prince Edward Island, has turned into the largest outdoor music festival in Atlantic Canada.

For the last ten years running, the Cavendish Beach Music Festival has attracted fans from all walks of life and brought in some of the biggest names in country music. This year is no exception, with a stacked line-up that includes Eric Church, Carrie Underwood, Russell Dickerson, and Cam.

So it's not surprising that this multi-day festival has received massive acclaim for putting on—what many consider to be—the biggest weekend of the year. Most recently, CBFM was awarded 'Festival of the Year' by the Canadian Country Music Association, beating out other popular events like the Calgary Stampede and Ontario's Boots and Hearts Music Festival.

But it's certainly no small feat to pull off a festival of this size and calibre. It takes concerted effort and lots of cooperation from numerous parties to bring it all to life. And while there's been lots of sing-a-longs and sunshine over the years, there's also been plenty of roadblocks and, of course, a little bit of rain.



IT A

I caught up with Jeff Squires, the President and CEO of Whitecap Entertainment, the organization behind the festival, just before the 2019 lineup was announced in November. We explored what it takes to pull off a festival like this, some of his most memorable moments over the years, and what he looks forward to the most each year.

EE: Where did the idea/dream for Cavendish Beach Music Festival first come from?

JS: The landscape in Atlantic Canada back in 2009 was that PEI was missing out on the concert business. Every summer there were one to two concerts in Halifax or Moncton, and people were not only not coming to PEI, but also leaving PEI in our summer tourism season. We felt PEI could be part of this and actually take the lead in becoming a go-to spot for world-class music.



TAKES VILLAGE

CBMF CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF
FOOT-STOMPIN' GOOD TIMES



EE: Why was Cavendish chosen as the location?

JS: Cottages, campgrounds, and existing infrastructure are needed to service the massive crowds. We felt wrapping the Cavendish destination with the music was a perfect fit.

EE: What does it take to produce a festival of this size and nature?

JS: Organizations and people committed to executing a great event. I see it every year. All those involved really see it as "their event" and are very proud to showcase and promote PEI to visitors. We have a great team at all levels of both private companies and service providers taking great pride in making this a marquee event in Canada.

EE: What would you say are your top three most memorable moments from the past 10 years?

JS: Tough question, as there are a lot of memorable moments. If I look back, in year one and the closing night with Reba and the sun setting on what was then a temporary stage... there was great sense of accomplishment that year. We had started something that had great potential.

2014 and Alabama on Saturday night. Watching multi-generational fans singing in unison to this legendary band was incredible. Young and old alike all knew their songs and it was awesome watching them sing together. At times Alabama held out the microphone on stage and did the same thing.

Taylor Swift in 2010. Grandmothers, mothers, and daughters all attending together and creating special family memories is something to remember.

EE: What do you most look forward to leading up to the festival each year?

JS: The anticipation of a great week. Looking at it now and in 2010, the atmosphere, the venue, and the excitement leading up to and during the event has continued to evolve. I enjoy seeing our Island full of visitors and showcasing all that PEI has to offer.

EE: What was your initial reaction when you found out CBMF won the CCMA's award for top festival?

JS: Proud. Proud of our team and proud of PEI. It was nice to be recognized within the industry. There is a real affinity for both CBMF and PEI across the country.

EE: What was it like to attend the awards ceremony and accept it in person?

JS: CBMF has become recognized from coast to coast. People within the industry know what a special thing we have here in PEI. We're part of celebrating country music across the world and I think people recognize what we have created.

EE: How has the festival evolved over the last 10 years?

JS: I think now the fans expect an announcement prior to Christmas every year. In the early days of the festival we sometimes did not announce until January, or even March some years. It has become an exciting week when CBMF announces their line-up each year for the following summer. The level of guest engagement is awesome!

EE: Describe your proudest moment from the last decade.

JS: Getting to ten years. There has been a lot of water under the bridge. Working with tourism in PEI, the Cavendish community, and helping grow our tourism industry has definitely been a highlight.

EE: How do you see CBMF shifting & improving over the coming years?

JS: Great question. All I can say is that the way it looks now is not the way it looked ten years ago. There will be changes and growth. Hopefully we can continue to be a big part of continuing to make Prince Edward Island the greatest tourism destination.

Interview by *Ellen Egan*
Photography by *Al Douglas*





JEFF SQUIRES
PRESIDENT



WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH A **\$1,000 MHG GIFT CARD?**



SHAYNA HENDERSON (Assistant General Manager, The Hotel on Pownal):

"I would have a weekend stay-cation with my husband at The Great George hotel, in a romantic hideaway suite, with one of their great packages! We'd also have the fridge stocked with PEIBC beer + Colliding Tides, followed by a nice dinner at The Brickhouse."

SAM HUGHES (Graphic Designer):

"That is a tough decision with so many great places to spend it. I think I would do a weekend trip to Halifax with friends and eat like kings at The Barrington."

NICOLE VESSEY (Assistant Manager, Gahan House Charlottetown): "The greedy side of me would be a no-brainer: hit the Barrington Steakhouse, but there is no better way to spread the love this time of year than over food with family and friends!"

HALEY CLARKE (Reservations & Marketing Manager, The Barrington Steakhouse & Oyster Bar): "If I had \$1,000 MHG gift card, I'd buy \$1,000 worth of cookies from Grounded Coffee Bar. The best chocolate chip cookie in Halifax!"

VALERIE DICKERSON (Front Desk Manager, The Great George Hotel):

"I would take my Great George fam out for some Beef Bacon & Blue apps as I ravish the selection of fine wines at Sims Corner. Then we would head to the Merchantman for some of those deadly pulled pork nachos and deck ourselves out in PEI Brewing Co. swag – because nothing fits better than a comfy sweater after a night out!"

TARA BURROWS (MHG Finance):

"\$1,000 would be so awesome! Easy answer is share/donate gift cards to others who are struggling right now. When your day is brightened you should pass it on and brighten someone else's day and let them be part of a memorable experience that our locations have to offer."

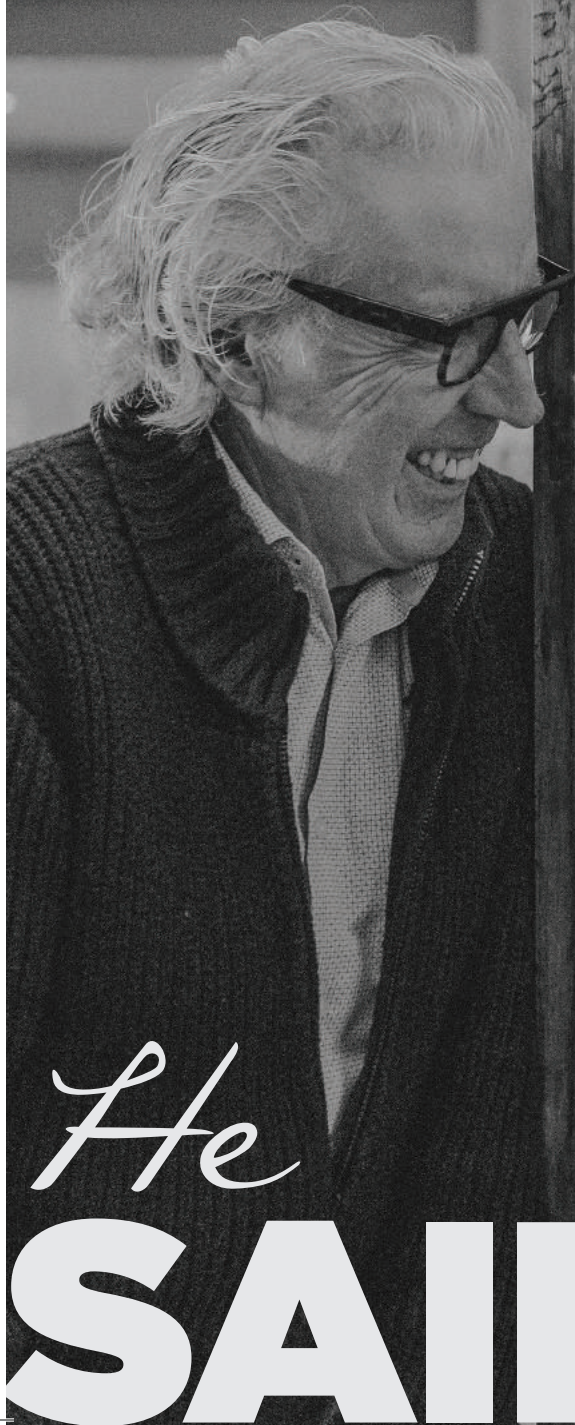
CHRIS LONG (Head Brewer, PEI Brewing Company):

"Not sure if I could spend it all in one night, but I could give it my best shot! Honeymoon Suite at the Great George, three course meal at the Brickhouse Kitchen & bar, then head up to Marc's Lounge for cocktails. Save a bit for the hangover breakfast at bar1911."

**Use MHG Gift Cards at any MHG location
across the Maritimes! It's the perfect gift.**

MHGGIFTCARD.COM

He, **Kevin Murphy**, is the President and CEO of the Murphy Hospitality Group



He
SAID

1. What's your favourite meal to cook at home?

I love cooking on the barbecue in the summer. It starts with a glass of red wine, then I prepare two nice 6 oz. perfectly aged Atlantic Beef Plant fillets (usually from Sims), maybe another glass of wine, PEI baked potato, Island corn, fresh PEI mushrooms and onions. I usually add a nice lobster tail or shrimp. This is what I call a PEI Surf and Turf.

2. What's your favourite place to travel and why?

I love the British Virgin Islands. This place is magical... on a boat with family and friends, you can't beat it. Every day is new but some things are the same. There is always sun, warm water, beautiful scenery, and cold beer. What is different is the neat places you pull into and the great little restaurants you find in coves around 4:30 p.m. for happy hour, dinner, and sunset.

3. What's your favourite way to unwind after a long day?

My place to unwind is Stanhope around the pool with a cold Beach Chair lager or maybe Island Red. It is always holiday time in Stanhope.

4. What's your partner's best quality?

Kathy is amazing. Besides her talent as a very cool business partner, her best quality is her compassion and having time for people. This is what I admire and maybe a little bit of my weakness.

5. What's your proudest MHG moment?

WOW, tough question. There are so many milestones in 38 years in business that are specific to an event or anniversary, but I guess what makes me most proud is the people in MHG... they are just great people who make MHG what it is today. That's it!!! It's all about the people.

6. Who's your favourite kid?

We have three beautiful, talented, but very different boys. I tell anyone they are great at what they do and they have the hospitality gene for sure. Very proud of them.

She, **Kathy Murphy**, is Kevin's "better half" and the creative mind and designer behind MHG's beautiful spaces

1. *What's your favourite meal to cook at home?*

By far Christmas dinner with our families and all the trimmings!

2. *What's your favourite place to travel and why?*

Europe, because there is so much culture, romance, history, the beautiful architecture, and delicious food and drink. If you can't find me, that's where I'll be...

3. *What's your favourite way to unwind after a long day?*

At home, sitting on the couch, sharing a pizza with my hubby, and sipping on a bottle of wine... or sitting by the fire, wrapped in a cozy throw, and reading a great book.

4. *What's your partner's best quality?*

His kind heart.

5. *What's your proudest MHG moment?*

Watching MHG grow as a team and having fun. Then sharing their energy/passion with everyone that comes through our doors. Amazing!!

6. *Who's your favourite kid?*

BenSamIsaac.

Ben's my favourite. ❤️

Sam's my favourite. ❤️

Isaac's my favourite. ❤️



She
SAID

it's all about **THE PEOPLE**

Rachel Vidito celebrates 22 years of spreading
high fives and positive vibes throughout the
Murphy Hospitality Group

BY ELLEN EGAN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY AL DOUGLAS







**THE CHIEF
CULTURE
OFFICER**

When Rachel Vidito walks into a room, it's hard not to feel her warmth and notice her presence. She exudes the sort of confidence and energy that's required of someone who represents the personality of a company as vibrant as the Murphy Hospitality Group.

Over the last two decades, Rachel's gone from being young and wild as "Monty" in cowboy boots at The Lone Star Cafe, to poised and polished in high heels at The Great George in Charlottetown. Challenge after challenge, she's taken them head on—all with a smile on her face, a go-getter attitude, and a fierce commitment to being professional while having a whole lot of fun.

Today, her role as MHG's Chief Culture Officer has her using the full range of her skillset. With her strategic mind, bubbly personality and maternal nature, she's quickly become the heartbeat of the company and the self-proclaimed queen of hugs and high fives.

We sat down at bar 1911 in early October to talk about what it takes to build a strong company culture, how she's learned to overcome fear and optimize her strengths, and why work-life balance is so important in an industry that's often all-consuming.

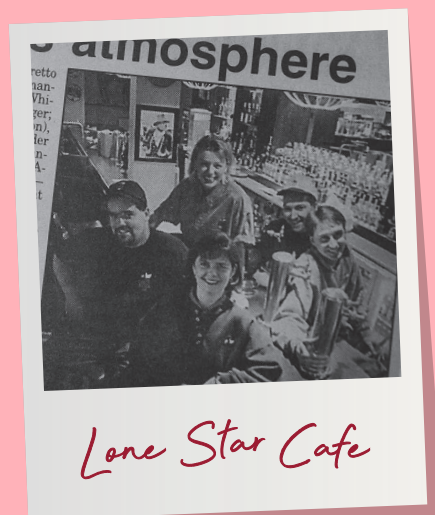
EE: What first drew you to the hospitality industry?

RV: I started working as a dishwasher at New Glasgow Lobster Suppers when I was 12-years-old. I don't know if you've ever dishwashed before, but it is the hardest job in the world. I fell in love with it, though. I remember my mom picked me up from my first shift and she said, "How was your first day?" and I was like, "Oh my God, I love it!" From there I always knew I was going to work in the industry.

After I graduated from high school, I went to UPEI for a year and a half but it wasn't for me, so I took some time off to work and travel. As I was travelling, I fell even more in love with the industry because everywhere you went, you had these wonderful, welcoming people who just wanted to serve you and be hospitable. When I decided to go back to school in 1996, I took the Hotel and Restaurant Management course at Holland College, which was awesome.

EE: Why did you decide to join the Murphy Hospitality Group?

RV: In October of 1996, the then-Director of Operations, Peter Williams, approached me about interviewing for a new restaurant that Kevin [Murphy] was opening, The Lone Star Cafe. The funny part about this whole thing is that I absolutely tanked my first interview with Kevin. I still say to him, "Thanks for hiring me!" because I did not do well in that interview. But he obviously saw something in me because I was hired as the AGM, and I've taken on different roles within the company ever since.



EE: What do you love about working for this company?

RV: Our people, our locations, the atmospheres! We always have a lot of fun at work. We're a big family. I also appreciate how they give you these opportunities to grow yourself. Like in November 2016, Kevin and Ben [Murphy] approached me about moving to the head office in the Senior HR position. Initially I was kind of like, "Whaaat?" because at the time I was the Director of Hotel Operations at The Great George and The Hotel on Pownal, and wasn't looking for a change at all. I loved the hotels, and still do. But then this opportunity presented itself to do something unique and challenging, and something I really enjoyed about the hotels was finding the right people to work there. So I thought it would be really fulfilling to be able to do that for the entire company. Mind you, I was very, very scared to do it, but I jumped at the opportunity. I did that for a year before that role turned into this Chief Culture Officer position.

EE: What does 'company culture' mean to you?

RV: It's really hard to define. I often say, "Well, it's not one thing, it's everything." But that still doesn't define it. So I look at culture like it's the personality of the company. And the people—it's all about the people. We can't do what we do without our people. For me, you hire the right people, you train them properly, you give them all the tools and resources they need to do their jobs, and then you just let them do it. It's really amazing and it works. It's so rewarding to watch these people just flourish and thrive.

Kevin and Kathy would really be the backbone of the culture. They're amazing to work for and with, and have been in business for 38-plus years, so the culture didn't just happen overnight. I think it started all those years ago and it's really evolved since then. We're here to make sure it continues on.

EE: How do you encourage this MHG culture in your role as Chief Culture Officer?

RV: Basically it's my job to ensure our company values—family, fun, passion, growth, and quality—are embedded in everything we do throughout the company. It's in how we communicate with each other, how we treat each other, how we hire, train, create succession planning, show leadership, and encourage growth and development. And it's also hugs and high fives on a really crazy day. So it's literally

**EVERYTHING
FROM A**
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to Z









And even though MHG has a very distinct company culture, each location under our umbrella has their own culture, their own “personality” as well. We want to create these happy, fun, creative, productive work environments where people really enjoy coming to work. Then part of my job is making sure they’re trained properly and have the tools and resources to do their jobs.

It’s also vitally important to me to be accessible to all. In any role I’ve had with the company, I’ve operated with an open door policy but with this CCO role, the door is open even wider. I like knowing (and find comfort in knowing) that our people know they can come to me any time, with anything, and I can and will help them navigate through whatever the situation might be. One of our MHG core values is family, and family is there to support family. Creating a ‘Culture of Care’ is something that is hugely important to me and I keep very close to my heart.

EE: Why is work-life balance so important to you?

One of my absolute die-hard philosophies is work-life balance because, honestly, I used to be terrible at it. Specifically when I was at The Great George, I was a first-class workaholic. It was actually my husband, Reagh, who one day was like, “Honey, you’re working too much.” I was so into it that I didn’t even notice, but I was starting to miss things like the kids’ sporting events or Spring Fling concerts. And the day my daughter asked, “Do you have your own bedroom at the hotel?” was the day I realized I needed to find more of a balance. Once I did, I felt much better at home and at work. It was a trickle-down effect: my team felt better and they were happier, having more fun, and being more productive. Win-win-win.

EE: How do you encourage work-life balance amongst your people?

Work is important in everyone’s lives but in my opinion it’s not everything. Family is so important and doing things that make you happy outside of work is important, so we always try to encourage our people to have a balanced life. We put a real concerted effort into making sure that everyone has time away from work to do the things they love. I’m sure a lot of companies do that, but it’s a big focus for us.

EE: How do you maintain a work-life balance in your own life?

RV: Outside of work I lead a very simplistic life. I get up early on the weekdays so I have my own quiet time and to get prepared for the day. I love to watch a movie with Reagh on the weekend and, of course, we’re always chasing the kids to their various sporting events. I’m also an avid reader and I enjoy curling up on the couch with a good book. I’ve always been physically active and love going to spin and yoga with Mel at Stride. My other favourite thing to do is to walk our dog, Reggie Miller Vidito, on the trail. It’s just my time away from everything.

EE: What (or who) has given you the strength to continue uplevelling in your career?

Kevin would 100% be my mentor throughout my career. There’s no doubt that the challenges I’ve faced and opportunities I’ve been given have molded me into the hospitality professional I am today. And I’ll say it all day long, I would not be where I am today if it wasn’t for my family, Reagh, Will and Katie. It’s our Vidito family rule that we all support each other in whatever we’re doing. For instance, when I’m away for a couple weeks to do a new restaurant open... I never want to be away from my family that long, but they know and understand how important the company is to me and have always been so supportive. Nothing is out of reach with them, and I love them dearly for that.

**“WE
CAN'T
DO
WHAT
WE DO
WITHOUT
OUR
PEOPLE.”**



WHAT'S COOKING?

WITH CHEF
BRANDON BOWERS
OF THE GAHAN HOUSE



JALAPEÑO MAC & CHEESE

When I think about comfort food, I think about all the meals I have made for my wife at home over the years: stuffed pork loin, chicken cordon bleu, or even an amazing tomato soup. But when it came down to it, I couldn't help but think back to a day when I was off from work—I remember it was raining and kind of cold. Normally on a day off I would go out golfing or fishing, but on this day the weather was not cooperating. So this led to a mid-afternoon hit of hunger. When I went to the kitchen to make something, I found I was down a little on supplies, but I did have all the things I needed to make the following dish...

DIRECTIONS

- In a medium pot, begin to boil water
- While it's coming to a boil, begin to shred your cheeses (4.5oz)
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees Celsius
- Pick seeds out of the pickled jalapeños and finely dice them
- When the water comes to a boil, place the macaroni into the pot and stir right away to prevent it from sticking. Bring the pot down to a simmer and cook macaroni for 9-12 minutes
- While the pasta is cooking, melt the butter in your microwave or slowly in a pot. Mix the panko (or bread crumb) with 3.5 oz. of cheese and pour the melted butter over it. Mix together well. Place to the side.
- Place the cream in a small saucepan and bring it to a simmer, then add the remaining 11 oz. shredded cheese and parmesan cheese once it's simmering. Stir it until the cheese is melted and incorporated, then add some salt and pepper.
- When the macaroni is cooked, strain and place it back in the pot. Then stir in the cheese sauce and chopped jalapeños.
- Place the mac and cheese into a pan and cover with the bread crumb mixture. Next, place in the oven for 10 minutes until golden brown.
- Remove from oven, wait your sweet time until it cools down a bit, and ENJOY!

INGREDIENTS

BASE

WATER 2.5 litres

MACARONI 500g / 1 litre

PICKLED JALAPEÑO 4 oz. volume /
1.7 oz. - weight

CHEESE SAUCE

CREAM 24 oz. volume

CHEESE 11 oz. weight

PARMESAN CHEESE 2 oz. weight

SALT 10 grams / 1 Tablespoon

PEPPER 5 grams / 1 teaspoon

BREAD CRUMBS

BUTTER 2 oz. weight

PANKO OR DRIED BREAD CRUMB OF ANY SORT
10 oz. volume / 155g

CHEESE 3.5 oz. weight
(separate from other cheese)



THE GAHAN HOUSE
Brewers of Handcrafted Ales

Brewery

Pub

Mercantile



**JALAPEÑO
MAC & CHEESE**
by CHEF BRANDON BOWERS

The Expansion

By *Ellen Egan*

From cozy coffee shops to swanky steakhouses, the Murphy Hospitality Group is steadily growing across Atlantic Canada

What started as one single restaurant, fondly known as “The Barn” back in 1980, has blossomed into a major hospitality player in Atlantic Canada. Indeed, MHG has grown substantially over the years and has started spreading their passion and warmth beyond the shores of PEI.

Today, you’ll find sister locations of the well-established Gahan House pub in each of the major Maritime cities - Halifax, Saint John, Fredericton, and soon-to-be Moncton (opening March 2019) - as well as the Barrington Steakhouse & Oyster Bar and Grounded Coffee Bar in downtown Halifax.

And while each location is unique to the trends and habits of each city, if you step off the street into any MHG establishment (no matter the area code) you’ll be sure to experience the same welcoming atmosphere, friendly faces, and delicious food that make their spaces so special.

In order to get the lowdown on what it takes to expand a company like this off-Island, I caught up with Ben and Isaac Murphy, who (among many others) play key roles in creating and opening these new locations. We talked about embracing opportunity, maintaining consistency, overcoming challenges, and growing the MHG family along the way.



When Opportunity Comes Calling

Ben, the oldest of the three Murphy brothers, has come a long way since slinging tortillas at the Lone Star Cafe at the tender age of 12. He's taken on various roles within the company since then and spent time travelling and going to school abroad. Today, he's the Chief Operating Officer and shared some of the ups and downs of creating new locations on the mainland.

I was expecting him to divulge an elaborate plan for taking over the Maritime restaurant scene, but instead he said it's all happened a bit more naturally. He explained how the first location, a new Gahan House they opened on the Halifax harbourfront in 2014, was due to some key relationships they'd built over the years, many hard-working people, and a bit of luck.

As it turns out, this one came together during one of their busiest months of the year: "We got a call from a landlord in Halifax right before Cavendish Beach Music Festival. He said, 'Hey, I've got the spot for you,' and we had to tell him we were a little busy that weekend but went over a couple of weeks later." And although the restaurant before it hadn't done

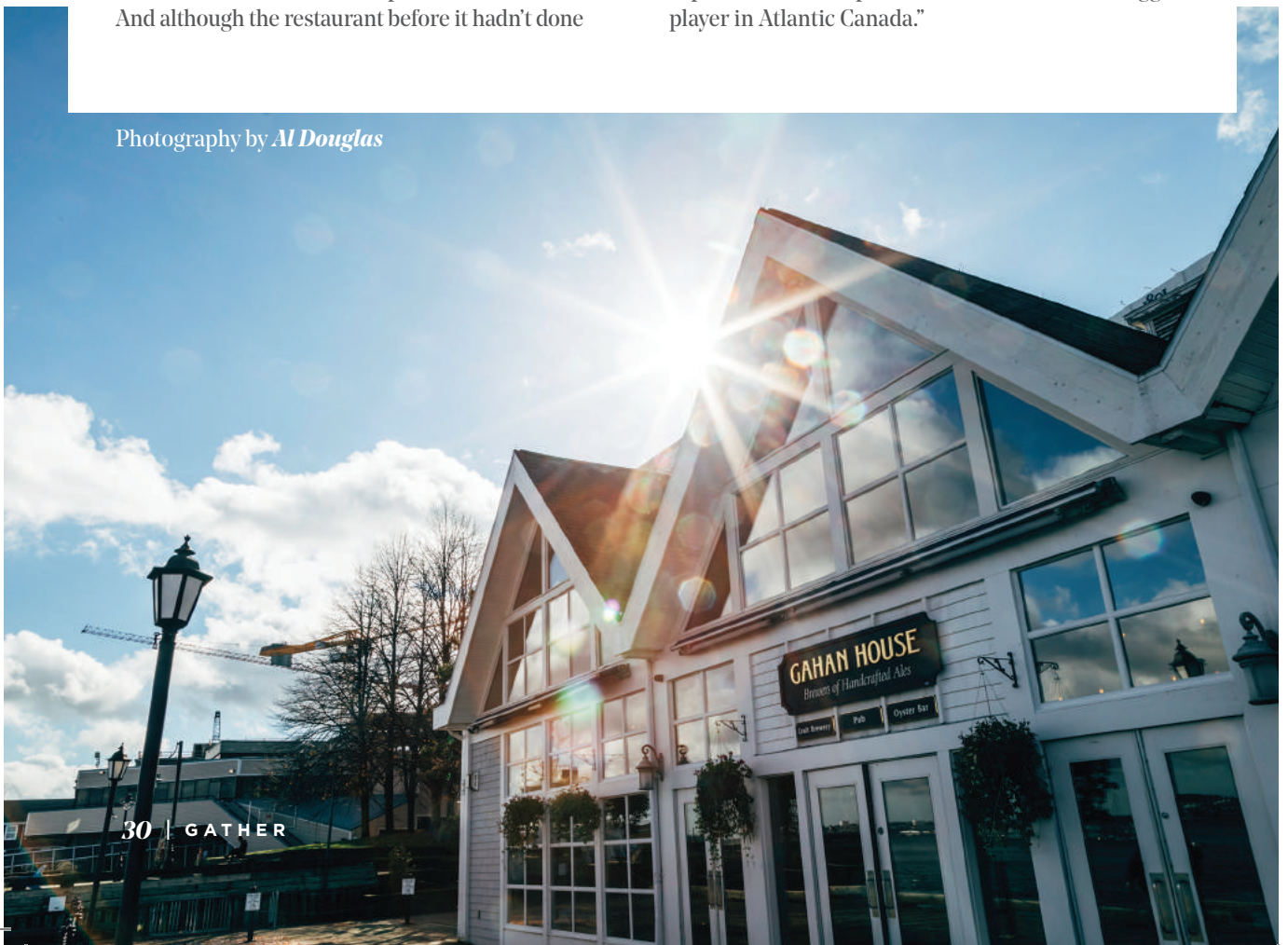
so well, they saw a beautiful location ripe with potential. In the end they signed the lease on August 6th and opened the new Gahan House Harbourfront on September 2nd.

"We renovated, hired and did everything in a month. It was foolish," Ben said. "We opened on a Friday, like we always do, and had to shut the kitchen down on the first day. It's something when we look back on it, we would never do again. We just got smoked every day."

But despite the initial growing pains, this decision has ultimately proven to be a smart business move. Not only has it improved Gahan beer sales - a big reason why they expanded in the first place - but it's also paved the way for other opportunities in the Maritimes.

"As we've gone off-Island now, we get more calls from landlords and developers who want a restaurant in their condo building or whatever the case may be," he explained. "So it's opened the doors for us as a bigger player in Atlantic Canada."

Photography by *Al Douglas*



Consistency Is Key

Although each location has its own unique flare, Ben explained that maintaining consistency through their people has been an important part of translating the MHG 'feel' across the Strait.

"Our reputation here on the Island means a lot, we're very hospitable," he said. "So we bring all new managers here for at least a week and usually go to one of our other locations for a couple of weeks so they can get a feel for things and meet everybody."

They've also had the same Project Manager, Isaac Murphy, the youngest of the three Murphy brothers, oversee most of the renovations and new location openings over the past few years.

"I think Isaac's lived out of a suitcase for the last three years," Ben said, only half joking. "But seriously, it's great to have someone on the ground who can keep things on track, answer questions, and execute the opening."

In fact, Isaac's been involved in nearly every aspect of the openings and has racked up countless kilometres between the Maritime cities.

"I think being a part of the new openings shows me the different levels of hospitality in each area," Isaac explained. "Each city has its own trends and habits. Seeing this allows us to adapt according to different markets and implement new and exciting ideas."

All Hands On Deck

It's no small feat to renovate and open a new restaurant, particularly in older locations, and there will inevitably be a few bumps and bruises along the way. Isaac described how it often takes lots of ingenuity and gathering people and resources to overcome these challenges.

"We completely gutted The Barrington in Halifax. It started from a clay basement to a three-floor, high-end steakhouse in about five months. It was pretty impressive," he said. "A lot of people came

together to pull that one off. Some people don't realize the amount of resources it takes to open a new restaurant. Luckily at MHG, we have plenty of support and our head office team and senior leaders jump right in when asked to help."

Ben agreed, and added: "And a big part of it is the family aspect. In Fredericton, for example, our whole family was there - so just showing that we care, helping out, cleaning tables, whatever needs be done. We can all shuck oysters, pour beer... it's all hands on deck."

Growing The MHG Family

For Isaac, meeting new people, welcoming them into the MHG "family" and watching them grow have been some of the most rewarding parts of the process.

"One thing that stands out for me is the amount of great people you meet," he said. "I've made some lifelong friends during these openings. Being able to show different cities our take on hospitality and family is also a pretty cool thing."

"We have welcomed so many amazing people into our extended family here at MHG and it's awesome," Isaac continued.

"I love being able to see people succeed and grow within our company. There are lots of individuals who have grown into various senior roles within MHG throughout the years and it's so great to see."

What's coming down the pike for the MHG expansion? Only time will tell but there's always something brewing, so keep an eye out for upcoming announcements on Instagram

@murphyhospitalitygroup or *Murphy Hospitality Group* on Facebook.

Dream big. Work hard. Have a beer.

The Perfect Winter Cocktails

LOOKING FOR THAT IDEAL WINTER COCKTAIL?

Look no further than Brickhouse Kitchen & Bar's new cocktail menu! Try the Blood Orange Margarita or a Winter Old Fashioned at home or head to Marc's Lounge, Brickhouse Kitchen & Bar's third floor to enjoy one made from their team Wednesday through Saturday!

Marc's
Lounge
UPSTAIRS





Blood Orange Margarita

Rocks Glass

Ingredients:

- 1.5 oz Cazadores
- 1 oz Orange Juice
- 2 Blood Orange Slices
- 2 Lime Slices
- 1 oz Simple Syrup

To make:

- 1) In shaker, combine all ingredients
- 2) Muddle
- 3) Add ice and shake
- 4) Salt rim of rocks glass and add ice
- 5) Strain all ingredients over ice
- 6) Garnish with blood orange slice

Winter Old Fashioned

Rocks Glass

Ingredients:

- 1.5 oz of choice of Bourbon
- 2-3 dashes of Dillon's Cranberry Bitters
- 1 oz Earl Grey Simple Syrup
- 1 Orange Slice

To make:

- 1) In rocks glass, combine bourbon, bitters, sugar and orange flesh
- 2) Muddle
- 3) Add ice and stir
- 4) Garnish with orange peel



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
BREWING CO.

FOR THE LOVE OF BREWING

AN INTERVIEW WITH JASON HAMBLY (PEIBC BREWER)

BY JULIE STUART

How did you first become interested in homebrewing? JH: I began homebrewing as a way to try and save a bit of money. Being able to make 60 beer for \$20 can get a lot of people interested in the hobby.

What was the most valuable homebrewing lesson you learned when you started out? JH: I don't feel like I learned much early on. I was making crappy kit beer and was happy drinking it. As I started modifying kits and eventually moving to all grain brewing, I began to pick up little bits of what I was actually doing, rather than just following a recipe. I was doing a lot of reading online, looking for recipes of famous beers that we can't buy around here. At the PEI Brewing Company I realized how much I did know, as well as the mountain of information I didn't know yet.

Do you remember what your first brew was? JH: At home my first brew was from a kit, it was a blonde. My first brew with PEI Brewing Company was a Blueberry Ale. I saved a can from that one, after I drank it.

What is your favourite beer? JH: 1772 is my favourite of our core brands. I love IPAs. Snowbird is definitely up there when it is in season.

What would be your dream beer to brew? JH: Pliny the Elder from Russian River in Santa Rosa, California.

What is the number one tip you'd give someone who asked you how to make a better brew at home? JH: Don't overthink it. It is easy to make a good beer without doing everything that you read online.

What is the first thing you remember about your first week of work at PEIBC? JH: I was overwhelmed by the amount of beer we were making at a time. I was also amazed by how close it was to what I was doing in my garage. I still homebrew and use many of the things I've learned at work at home, and vice versa.

What is one thing about the brewing industry that beer drinkers may not know? JH: We are great at cleaning everything.

What do you think it is that sets East Coast beers apart from other beers in Canada? JH: Perhaps more sense of community, coming from smaller towns and cities in general than the rest of the country.

What draught styles do you see becoming trendy in the next few years? JH: I don't think New England IPAs (NEIPA) are going away anytime soon. But I'm excited to see what will catch on. Sours and wild fermented beers have definitely been growing.

What is your dream brewery to collaborate with? JH: Dogfish Head in Milton Delaware. Learning from and talking to Sam Calagione would be amazing.

What is your favourite thing about working as a professional brewer with PEI Brewing Company? JH: I want to help us grow and improve. I love knowing that I am going to work to make a product that I believe in.



UPCOMING EVENTS

IN CHARLOTTETOWN

MARCH 9TH. ALAN DOYLE AT THE HOMBURG THEATRE: Iconic Newfoundland singer-songwriter, best-selling author, actor, and recent recipient of the Order of Canada, Alan Doyle returns to Charlottetown in support of his third solo album, *A Week at the Warehouse*. confederationcentre.com

MARCH 13TH. CHRISTINA MARTIN AT BAR1911: Her songs have been featured in films and television, and she's performed at music festivals around the world (Rolling Stone Weekender Festival, Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival, Folk Alliance International and Reeperbahn Festival) and she's coming to bar1911 in Charlottetown this March! bar1911.com

MARCH 30 - 31ST. ISLAND ENTERTAINMENT EXPO: PEI's first full-scale popular culture fan convention focused on the entertainment industry. The event will touch on several key areas, including: gaming, music, movies, television and literature. Consider them very similar to a Comic Con! islandexpo.ca

APRIL 12TH. TOKYO POLICE CLUB: Incredibly talented, internationally renowned band Tokyo Police Club came together in 2005 and played some small shows throughout the Toronto area. Tokyo Police Club were asked to play in the Pop Montreal festival and soon after they signed with Toronto label Paper Bag Records. Recommended. peibrewingcompany.com

MAY 23 - 24TH. PEI FESTIVAL OF WINES: Three nights of Grand Tasting sessions with over 260 wines from around the world. This event also includes a number of Winemaker's Dinners that offer a unique tasting experience, featuring a curated 4- or 5-course menu that highlights wine pairings from a select winery. peiwinefest.com



*Colliding
Tides*
GIN TWIST

Available at PEI Liquor

please drink responsibly

   @collidingtides