

Webb Weekly

A Family-Oriented Publication

Executive Chef Dave Knight Has Varied and Extensive Experience

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SALES: Monday – Friday 9-6 • Saturday 10-2

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Farrington Place, a local full-service banquet venue and off-site catering business, enjoys an enviable reputation and is one of the best-regarded new businesses that have debuted in recent years. One reason for earning this enviable reputation has been the talent and good work of its Executive Chef, Dave Knight.

Knight has had a long-term and wide-ranging love for the culinary arts.

"I have had a love and appreciation for food for as long as I can remember. Growing up and spending summers traveling to the Middle East— my mother's homeland — and where there were no grocery stores — our meals were cooked using fresh ingredients from the farmer's markets as that was all that we had to cook with," Knight told Webb Weekly. "My mother was a huge influence on my interest in food because she taught me about my heritage and culture, what ingredients to look for, and how meals were much more than eating. It was a time to spend with family and friends in large groups, talking about the day's events. It wasn't meant to be eaten at 70 miles per hour out of a bag sitting on the passenger seat."

His more than 36-year career has been highlighted by various accomplishments, awards, and opportunities, including cooking for Presidents Bush and Clinton and cabinet members at the Willard Intercontinental during the campaign and inauguration. Also at the Hotel Teatro with the Kevin Taylor Group and the Westin Hotel in Denver cooking for President Obama and the Secret Service, where he was honored to receive a secret service pin, during his two campaigns. He also cooked for Jacques Pepin when he won the 7th Annual Pastry Chef Competition in New York City. His most memorable culinary

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"I continued to absorb information and educate myself about cooking during and after my formal schooling," stated Knight. "I was further influenced by leaders in the industry, including Julia Childs and Auguste Escoffier, and my instructors Chef Jan Bandula, pastry instructor at Baltimore Culinary, and Chef Josef Heroine at New England.

He continued, "After making the decision to relocate my family back to the East Coast from Colorado was when I met Eric and Anna and began working for Farrington Place as a chef consultant as they expressed an interest in expanding their catering business and associated menus.

"Within six months, I joined their team as their executive chef and have enjoyed bringing diversity to their menus and to the cultures we cater to. I appreciate how supportive they have been in listening to my perspectives and supporting exploration with a variety of ethnic cuisines; moving away from frozen and canned and towards fresh ingredients, allowing me to introduce made-from-scratch products such as breads and pastas; in-house processes such as fabrication of meats and fish; and redesigning the kitchen to be more efficient and purchasing equipment for expansion that allows us to do more which ultimately benefits our patrons.

"The Pop-Up Restaurant idea brought a finer dining experience to the community and introduced them to global cuisine. I look forward to continuing these exclusive culinary dining experiences with the community as well as introducing them to global cuisine. I look forward to continuing these exclusive culinary dinners."

Knight's boss at Farrington Place, owner Eric Winters, is pleased to have someone like Knight on his staff.

"Having Dave on our team is phenomenal. We love his attitude, calmness, expertise, knowledge, unique background and abilities," Winters stated. "Dave has lived all over, traveled to many countries, and lived abroad. His expertise and what he brings back from these experiences are unmatched in this area. He loves to teach, and last year, we took on two very lucky interns from PCT. The experience they received and the personal one-on-one time he was able to dedicate to these interns was an incredible experience for them. Not to mention the real-life cooking experience they got.

"With Dave's unique ethnic background, we've been able to enter the Indian market, providing traditional Indian foods for several weddings in the area. Dave won the People's Choice Award at the Fall 2023 River Valley Health and Dental's Eat Around the World fundraiser," Winters continued. "He selected Persian (Iran) food as his country, and it was the most popular of the ten attending chefs.

"Dave brings a calmness to the kitchen that we've never seen before. It is not uncommon for us to cater multiple events at the same time, all with different menus and different guest counts. We cater events as small as 20 people to as large as 10,000. Dave is one of the few chefs that gets outside the kitchen and will drive to a wedding site (barn, tent, or another venue) and he cooks fresh on site. He'll make the pasta sauces right on-site. He cooks the steaks fresh minutes before dinner. Everything he does he truly puts his heart into it. You can taste the difference. Dave's work ethic truly stands out."

Winters concluded, "For me, I learn from Dave every single day. He's always willing to teach, and he's always patient."

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