

## EPIC Restaurant Chef Ryan Gustafson

Ever innovative, Chef Ryan Gustafson is at the forefront of the sustainable food movement. Dedicated to avoiding all endangered species, he is making a positive environmental impact in the industry that captivated him as a child.

Born in Regina, Saskatchewan, Gustafson grew up in a family that values food. In the mornings, rather than joining his older brother, James, on the playground, Gustafson could be found in the kitchen baking bread with his grandmother. An amazing cook, she proved to be an early influence on his life, teaching him that the best way to show love and appreciation for others is to present them with a great meal.

Gustafson entered the food industry when he was 16 as a "jack-of-all-trades" at a local pizzeria. At the popular, family-style restaurant, he did everything from food preparation and cooking to hosting and making deliveries.

In 2001 he enrolled at the Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts in Vancouver, winning the award for British Columbia's top culinary student later that year. He worked his way up the ranks and gained the experience that would eventually land him a job with Fairmont Hotels and Resorts.

He began his hotel career in 2001 at Alberta's Jasper Park Lodge, taking advantage of the opportunity to be immersed in cuisine. There, he was exposed to various areas of the industry and experienced an incredible amount of cross-training as a result. He also benefited from the company's many travel opportunities, moving to the Château Whistler in 2004 followed by The Fairmont Dubai in 2006.

"The standard of service at Spectrum on One is very high," said Gustafson of Dubai's Five-Diamond restaurant where he worked as a Sous Chef. It also won the title of Best Global Restaurant in 2006, quite an accomplishment given the competitiveness of the industry. "There is a 'never say no' policy with guests, so we were often creating outrageous dishes. I loved the challenge."

In 2007, Gustafson made his way to Toronto to join his longtime love, Erin. As Sous Chef for The Fairmont Royal York, he oversaw Benihana Japanese Steakhouse, Piper's Gastropub, Library Bar and In-Room Dining, taking the opportunity for growth in his personal life.

He is now the EPIC Restaurant Chef and aims to make the restaurant a leader in the sustainable food movement. An enthusiastic supporter of the hotel's rooftop herbs, honey and grape vines, Gustafson believes The Fairmont Royal York has the resources to make a big impact with responsible purchasing choices.

Further to that, he is also committed to EPIC's partnership with the Ocean Wise conservation program. Known for the unparalleled seafood on their menu, EPIC is educating their guests and culinary brigade about the importance of making environmentally friendly seafood choices.

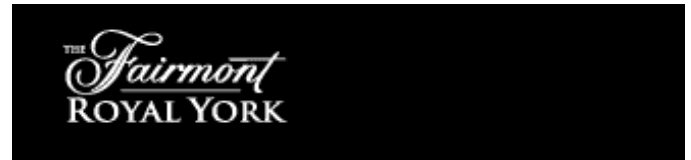
Gustafson is inspired professionally by Kamal Uduwarage, the Executive Chef at The Fairmont Vancouver Airport under whom he studied in Alberta, British Columbia and Dubai. He sees him as a mentor and is deeply appreciative of the time the veteran invested in him. Uduwarage is very artistic with a drive for excellence and an attention to detail. Also very meticulous, Gustafson admits to being cautious about trends.

"I'm not into fusion," said Gustafson. "If certain foods compliment one other naturally, like fennel, oranges and olives, just stick with them."

He has a deep understanding of proper cooking techniques and makes a point to stay true to the flavours. This philosophy has brought him much success and he enjoys passing his knowledge on to others.

This prairie boy's favourite meal is nothing fancy, though. He's happy indulging in barbecued steak, baked potatoes and corn on the cob. For him, eating is one of the greatest perks of the job.

When Gustafson isn't busy in the kitchen, he enjoys reading political memoirs and Canadian literature. He is also an avid football fan who supports the Saskatchewan Roughriders and the Green Bay Packers.



**Ryan Gustafson**  
**Culinary Arts**  
**July 2001**