



PIPPIN HILL FARM & vineyards

Ian Rynecki

Executive Chef

Entertaining and gastronomy are in the heart and soul of this third generation culinarian. Pippin Hill Farm's executive chef, Ian Rynecki began absorbing a passion for cooking at an early age from his parents and grandparents who were exceptional cooks. His two cousins share this same love of food and are also professional chefs in their respected cities. His uncle, a formidable force in influencing Ian's career path, was once a sous chef to Jeremiah Tower at Stars, and to Patrick O'Connell at The Inn at Little Washington. With these instrumental influences surrounding him, Ian's career path was destined for the kitchen and to follow the traditions of his family's trademarks—sustainability and a celebration of the farm.

As the executive chef at Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards, with a fine dining, catering, and farm-to-table background, Ian Rynecki is continuously motivated by the carefully cultivated gardens and the medley of greens grown on the property. Guests quickly learn that this place is not just about locally sourced cooking in theory, but is deeply committed to making it a reality.

For Ian, being a part of the team at Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards means leading a balance of experienced chefs to fairly green cooks in the kitchen, which speaks to his sense of paying it forward. "Raising up young cooks is my favorite aspect of the job, and one of the most important," he says. "I see a lot of myself in these young cooks, so eager to learn. My rule for them, and for myself, is learn something, add something to your tool box, every day, no matter how small, even if it's just a tiny improvement in the way you cut celery."

Together, Ian and his staff carry out the vision of Easton Porter Group Culinary Director Amalia Scatena, with menus influenced by northern Italian and French cuisine. Ian, determined to promote sustainability, sources proteins from local Virginia farms and fishermen. His produce comes from the Pippin Hill Farm kitchen garden, supplemented by the nearby farmers market. Everything that can be composted, gets composted. Having entered the kitchen, all ingredients are met with elaborate care, and may be roasted, cured, or pickled prior to presentation in the Tasting Room, or at a wedding dinner.

The Simsbury, Connecticut native was at first a self taught chef, cooking continuously in his spare moments when he was not in the classroom earning his degree in Anthropology from the University of Vermont. While in Burlington, his professional introduction in the kitchen was under the watchful eye of a Sushi Master; besides learning the painstaking art of sushi rolling, it was here that he was steeped in a culture of wasting nothing, which fostered Ian's intense dedication to sustainability, and stewardship of the environment. He then ventured out west to be under the wing of his uncle in Big Sky, Montana, and to be lead line cook at a resort whose restaurant served record numbers in season. Hunting and fishing came with the territory, and using the whole animal was a standard

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approach. "Haute chuck wagon" is how Ian describes the outdoorsy cuisine he prepared for patrons he'd accompany out on hunting and fishing excursions.

Ian's experience in a fastidious, highly disciplined open kitchen provided the young sauté cook with an important introduction to the French brigade system, which enabled his launch as chef de cuisine at Farm Restaurant, in Avon, Connecticut. His work at the well-regarded farm-to-table establishment, with a 700 square-foot kitchen garden in his care, was one of the most fulfilling positions at the onset of his career, and prepared him for his eventual leadership of the Pippin Hill Farm vineyard-to-table concept. It was at Farm restaurant that he began to be curious about wine -- an assignment that became an interest that has since blossomed into a passion.

Ian staged at Gary Danko, and Spruce, both Michelin-starred restaurants in San Francisco, before stepping away from fine dining and into the world of catering. To gain experience in high volume preparation and dining he worked as an executive sous chef with several top catering groups - Taste Catering, Sonnier & Castle and Neumann's Kitchen, the latter two of which are New York City's premiere caterers. His deep experience in that field serves him well in his role at Pippin Hill Farm, an environment created for distinctive events as well as agritourism.

Ian's refined wine sensibility assures that every bite is in tune with the viniculture of Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards, enjoyed within sight of the lovely hillside where it all begins.

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The hospitality company Easton Porter Group, owned by Dean Porter Andrews and Lynn Easton, manages premiere properties in Charlottesville, Virginia, and Charleston, South Carolina. The EPG portfolio includes Easton Events, Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards and Red Pump Kitchen in Charlottesville, as well as Zero George Hotel, Zero George Restaurant and Bar and Cannon Green in Charleston. Easton Porter Group delivers distinctive hospitality experiences and services without compromise.

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