



In the kitchen with...

Chef Tyler Cunningham, Mudtown Station, Owen Sound

Chef Tyler grew up in Owen Sound and started his culinary career washing dishes at Grey Heron.

Falling in love with the food industry, he attended George Brown and, after an apprenticeship in Toronto, he worked in the GTA for 20 years, running the Air Canada Club for a couple of years, working for Martin Short at his Lake Rosseau cottage in Muskoka, and catering for Dan Aykroyd, among other gigs.

Intrigued with starting with a restaurant from the bottom up, with an energetic and positive team, combined with the personal benefits of a slower pace and more time with his wife and daughter, Chef Tyler moved back to Owen Sound and started at Mudtown Station in May 2018.

Five minutes with the Chef

Grey Bruce Boomers (GBB):

What would your last meal be?

Tyler Cunningham (TC):

Sundubu Jigae soup, a kimchi and tofu Korean soup dish. It warms my soul, spicy, interesting. To drink, a Mudtown Interchange IPA.

GBB: What is your favourite thing to cook?

TC: I love cooking from what I see. I get inspired by visuals and the concept of growth.

GBB: If you weren't a chef, what would you do?

TC: A geologist or cabinet maker.

Woodworking is my hobby and I love figuring things out, learning and working with my hands.

GBB: What trends do you see in the food industry?

TC: Definitely healthy eating and a move to more vegetable-based diets. People are looking for more variety in their dining experience. We like to offer smaller portions so people can try more new things.

GBB: What are your tips for home chefs?

TC: Don't be afraid to fail because it will happen. There is no way to move forward without failing. I think people's biggest mistakes are taking recipes too literally. Salt and sweetness come in many different varieties and, as long as they follow the same flavour profile, you can play with different variations.

To Drink?

Mudtown Dark Mild. It's a light-bodied dark beer that pairs nicely with the mushrooms but is light enough to not detract from arugula.



MUDTOWN MUSHROOM PIZZA WITH WALNUT PESTO

INGREDIENTS

Dough

3½ cups bread flour
1 tsp sugar
1 packet instant dry yeast
2 tsp kosher salt
1½ cups water at 110 F
2 tbsp olive oil

Toppings

500 g Ricotta cheese
400 ml walnut pesto
2 lbs mixed mushrooms
Olive oil, salt, pepper, arugula, crushed chili to taste

Walnut Pesto

125 g walnuts, toasted and finely chopped
25 g flatleaf parsley, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1 piece lemon zest
1 tbsp black pepper, cracked
1 cup Parmigiano Reggiano, microplaned
100 ml extra virgin olive oil
Salt to taste

DIRECTIONS

For the pizza dough, combine the bread flour, sugar, yeast and kosher salt in the bowl of a stand mixer and combine. While the mixer is running, add the water and 2 tbsp of the oil and beat until the dough forms into a ball. If the dough is sticky, add additional flour, 1 tbsp at a time, until the dough comes together in a solid ball. If the dough is too dry, add additional water, 1 tbsp at a time. Scrape the dough onto a lightly floured surface and gently knead into a smooth, firm ball.

Grease a large bowl with the remaining olive oil, add the dough, cover the bowl with plastic wrap and put it in a warm area to let it double in size, about one hour. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and divide it into two equal pieces. Cover each with a clean kitchen towel or plastic wrap and let them rest while you make the walnut pesto.

For the walnut pesto, combine all ingredients in small mixing bowl and set aside.

Preheat oven to 450 F. Knead the dough again for five minutes and roll out thinly on a pizza tray. Sauce liberally with the walnut pesto, right to the edges of the dough, then add the mushrooms, salt, pepper and ricotta cheese. Be generous with the mushrooms as they tend to shrink in the oven.

Bake for eight to 10 minutes until golden and crisp. Once your pizza is sufficiently crisp and brown, add a handful of fresh arugula, drizzle with olive oil and finish with some quality sea salt and crushed chili. ■

Chef Tyler chose this recipe to share because it is a good representation of what he does at Mudtown Station. It has fresh, clean, bright flavours and is not overly complicated. Find Chef Tyler at Mudtown Station, 1198 1st Ave E., Owen Sound. 519-371-3575.

www.mudtownstation.ca