



PASSION THROUGH FOOD

By Andrew Davis

Never have I ever been welcomed to a meeting with an herb, but when I met with Ethan he greeted me with a piece of Thai Basil. An herb that has a sweeter taste than its American counterpart, but doesn't journey into candy territory. This was a welcome I will never forget because if you show up like that you aren't just going through a phase you are dedicated. This wasn't the only thing he brought with him, under his arm was a cookbook from the prestigious restaurant Alinea, and with him was a collection of knowledge and potential forged from his burning passion for cooking.



Images from left to right:
Alineas signature dish.

Ethan's favorite dish named
Raspberry Transparency.
Which was created by
accident by Grant Achatz

ETHAN RUTLEDGE

THE INSPIRATIONS

Ethan Rutledge is an aspiring chef who works two jobs and is going to tech campus to hone his skills as a cook. He does these things to eventually pay the bills and to work at the restaurant Alinea, a fine dining experience in Chicago that has a prestigious reputation.

Alinea was one of the first fine dining experiences Ethan was exposed to along with Fleur De Lys another fine dining restaurant located in San Francisco. When Ethan was young he had chosen where his family was going for vacation, and he had chosen to travel to San Francisco for a fantastic evening out at Fleur De Lys. Prior to going, he had sent a letter to the main chef **Hubert Keller**, who he had looked up to for some years, to notify him of when they'd be there so he could meet him. Unfortunately, the head chef wasn't present the night they arrived, but at the counter was **Hubert's** wife. When they checked in for their reservation the wife recognized the name and gave them extra courses during their

meal. This experience only uplifted Ethan and made his passion burn brighter.

THE BEGINNINGS OF A BEAUTIFUL SKILL

He recalls learning his first skills from the Young Chefs Academy in Illinois. There he learned the basic skills he would later build on. He brings up a story that caused a turning point in his life” During one of the classes I had realized that I'd become much more aware of my surroundings, and I think that came with the cooking and cleaning I was doing at the academy. One day I saw a kid putting his finger in the food and I was disgusted like he was doing some unspeakable crime. Before the academy, I wouldn't have taken another glance but the academy changed me”. His time there left a mark on him and he used that to progress and become better and to perfect his art.

He was on a very steady pace of learning new techniques and cooking daily, but when he injured his left leg and he went into a deep depression. He atrophied his left side

and that had psychological and physical implications. After therapy and a lot of heavy metal music he recovered and from this he started working out. During this time he had stopped cooking almost entirely, and a few skills got lost in the in the void. When he recovered though he went right back to cooking.

With how enthralled

A CRIPPLING INJURY

Ethan is with cooking culture he plans on pursuing this as a career. His dream is to work at Alinea, and to get there he plans to go to The Culinary Institute of America in New York City. This would springboard him into a good career, and the real hope is to work with his inspirations such as Magnus Nilsson, Alex Atalia, and Grant Achatz. Magnus Nilsson is the head chef of the famed restaurant Favikan in Sweden which is ranked the 57th best in the world. Alex Atalia is a

THE DREAM

Brazilian chef who runs the restaurant D.O.M, which is rated 4th best in

the world. Grant Achatz is better known for his creation of progressive cuisine and he also attended The Culinary Institute.

A BURNING PASSION

Ethan has been doing cooking-related activities since the age of five and hearing him talk about why he does food was truly inspiring. He talks like all he knows is fine dining and breathing, but he speaks with such passion and ferocity. He went in depth about beverage pairings and how the right beverage paired with the right course can cause an otherwise uneventful meal to turn into a carnival of flavors and a circus of sensations. I have my hobbies I'm passionate about and I've only met less than a handful of people who can match my tenacity for a hobby. Ethan Rutledge blows everyone else out of the water.