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Chef and Tell

Chef Dustin Christofolo of Quiessence on What You Can Expect When It Reopens and How He Got Started in the Family Business

By Lauren Saria Mon., Oct. 14 2013 at 10:00 AM

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Lauren Saria

Chef Dustin Christofolo at The Farm at South Mountain, outside Quiessence.

Dustin Christofolo

Executive Chef
Quiessence, The Farm at South Mountain
602-276-0601
www.quiessencerestaurant.com

After years of running the show at The House at Secret Garden, chef Dustin Christofolo will take the reins at **Quiessence** when the restaurant reopens at the end of October. He'll replace chefs Greg LaPrad and Tony Andiaro, who moved on from the restaurant in spring after eight years there. Today, we chat with Christofolo about how he ended up in the family business (his mom, Pat Christofolo, owns The Farm Kitchen at The Farm at South Mountain, Morning Glory Cafe, and Santa Barbara Catering, and the pair co-own The House at Secret Garden) and how he knows he's ready to take on the high-profile

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position of executive chef. Don't forget to come back Tuesday for the second part of the interview, where we find out more about his first passion: wine.



The edible garden at Quiescence.

Lauren Saria

It's been only a few months since the Farm at South Mountain's Quiescence shut down for the season amid news that chef and owner Greg LaPrad wouldn't be returning in the fall. For many Valley residents, it meant the end of an era, during which LaPrad and his friend and executive chef Tony Andiaro brought the farm-to-table movement from California to Arizona. They established the charming eatery as a destination for simple, fresh cuisine, making it arguably one of the best restaurants in the city.

But today we aren't telling the story of either of those chefs. Today is a chance to look forward to what we can expect when Quiescence re-opens for the season at the end of the month.

Dustin Christofolo (as you might have surmised from his name) is no stranger to the farm or its dining outlets. As the son of successful restaurateur Pat Christofolo, he can honestly say he grew up around it all.

"It kind of leads me to believe it's in my blood," Christofolo says.

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Which isn't to say he intended to end up working at Quiescence. In fact, he aimed to be a professional wake boarder back in the day (hey, we all had dreams). But Christofolo began helping his mom with her Santa Barbara Catering Company -- running errands and making drops before he ever settled on and a got started on another career. And before he knew it, he was knee-deep in the family business.



Lauren Saría

Though Christofolo may not be the biggest name in town, it doesn't mean he's not qualified to step into the spotlight as Quiescence's executive chef.

For starters, he's got plenty of hands-on experience as the chef at sister restaurant The House at Secret Garden, where he'd been running the show since the family acquired the restaurant. He's also a graduate of Italian Culinary Academy in New York City and worked as general manager at Quiescence while the restaurant was under LaPrad's control.

Watching the restaurant grow was a formative experience for this chef, and he says he was inspired by the work LaPrad and Andiaro did. He was young and so were the two chefs, and Christofolo fondly remembers the challenges they faced as such a fresh-faced crew with such big ambitions.

"They really kinda of set the standard for local and seasonal in Arizona," he says. "It was something that made me really proud to be a part of that."

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