

Guest Chef Recap: An Authentic, Rustic Worldly Food Experience at the Lodge

written by Lucas Calhoun | October 3, 2021

Enjoying the concept of [rustic-worldly food](#) took on a French motif this past week with Guest Chef Gary Marquardt in-residence as part of the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge's [Guest Chef Program](#). This unique program brings in a guest chef to share their speciality with Lodge patrons as well as expand the skill set of our own KML team.

Chef Gary is an award winning, certified executive chef with over 40 years of experience. Even with his long tenure in the food business, he continues to focus on learning new aspects of the profession. This mirrors one of our [Core Values](#) – to persistently learn. This was evident as he and KML's resident chef, Widad Mueller, collaborated for weeks in advance of the event creating a delectable and innovative five-course meal centered around the French style of charcuterie.



The concept of charcuterie dates back to the Roman empire, but since the 15th century, it has been closely connected to France and French cuisine. Practitioners spend hours preparing various meats, in particular pork, in an effort to present them in the most diverse ways. Most commonly, the meats used are pork, fish, poultry, and game meats (ex. venison).

The focus of Chef Gary's program revolved around a dinner on [Wednesday, September 29th](#). Our guests reserved their seats for

either a 6pm or 7:30pm sitting and were treated not to a menu, but [a culinary journey](#) that included specific wine and Michigan craft-beer pairings. Each sitting began with introductions of the KML chef and servers before an introduction to the evening's courses by Chef Gary.



First up was a terrine, a wonderfully executed venison with cognac-infused pheasant sausage, cranberry, and wrapped in bacon.



Following this delicious appetizer, our servers delivered salade nicoise. This serving of mixed greens, tomato, boiled egg, haricot vert, pickled onion, smoked fish, and tarragon vinaigrette was paired with either the [KM Ale](#) or a [Mondavi Pinot Grigio](#). These two starters were portioned well to set the stage for the three entree options to come.



Entree options included Ratatouille, Pan Seared Salmon-Beurre Blanc, and the marquee Choucroute Garnie. The Choucroute Garnie included special house made garlic sausage from start to finish by Chef Gary. The wine pairings options for these amazing entrees included [Mondavi Pinot Noir](#) or [Sauvignon Blanc](#) and beer pairings included selections from [Keweenaw Brewing Company's Red Jacket Ale](#) and [Ore Dock's Queen City](#) – both craft-beers from Upper Peninsula breweries.



To close out this culinary journey, the final course was an apple tart topped with a calvados caramel sauce and a scoop of ice cream.



The two dining sessions allowed guests authentic opportunities to enjoy each course with their drink pairings and share in genuine conversations at their leisure in the Lodge's historic Dining Room. Chefs Gary and Widad made their way around to each table getting to know them as well as inquiring about their interest in charcuterie. These interpersonal and culinary connections link directly to our rustic worldly food concept

that we practice here at the Lodge.



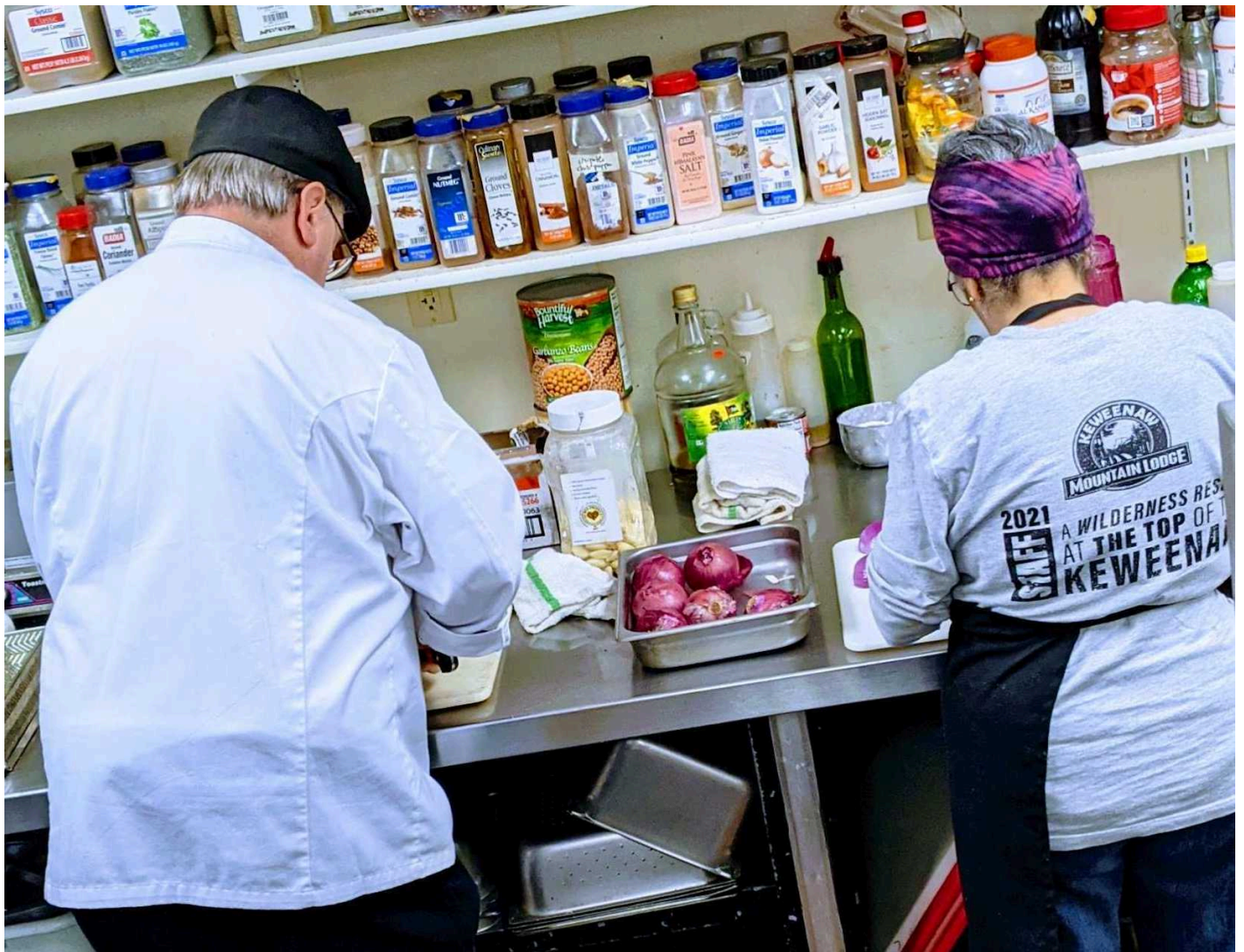
As each sitting came to a close, many guests commented with excitement about the amazing taste of the food, the ability to try something new, and the time to be together. Many of our guests left saying they would be ready to sign up for the next one.



Behind the scenes

Part of the purpose of the [Guest Chef Program @ the Lodge](#) revolves around learning new things. As such, The kitchen team at the Lodge was able to work with Chef Gary during his residency in preparing the menu that he and Chef Widad worked on. This keeps the kitchen team energized and generates new ideas for our [rustic worldly food](#).





[Lucas Calhoun](#)

Lucas is honored to serve as the Operations Lead at the Lodge, ensuring the departments are working together, organizational values are consistently shared and practiced, and working to guide the organization's long-term viability. Combining over 20 years of K-12, higher education, and, food services experiences in Indiana, Maine, Maryland, and Alaska, Lucas is committed to

living out and sharing the Lodge's team values that lead to the main team values of *fun, joyous, adventuresome*. Additionally, he is always up for a conversation about the wonderful history and evolution of the Lodge!

Welcome Guest Chef Widad Mueller! June 26th-30th

written by Grace Schmitz | October 3, 2021

The Keweenaw Mountain Lodge has finished developing our staples menu for our restaurant, which will be [offered every day](#) at the restaurant during the 2019 summer season. While we ran our limited menu during the first month of operations to test the palates of guests, we have created a menu which we are sure will entertain your tastebuds. [Our new menu](#) includes vegetarian and vegan options, too!

In addition to finishing our main menu, the Lodge will soon be hosting guest chefs that will help direct the influence of our specials menu for that week. These chefs will be introducing new flavors into the specials menu and are hoping to create a spark with their specialized global cuisine. We will still be running our staples menu during the week our guest chefs visit, however, we encourage those visiting the Lodge to be adventurous and try these unique dishes.

Our first guest chef is [Widad Mueller](#); culinary artist and wife of Keweenaw Mountain Lodge owner, John Mueller. Widad was born and raised in Lebanon, which is the home of Mediterranean cuisine. Lebanon is located in the Middle East, directly between

Asia and Europe, and is home to a friendly, open culture, which has allowed for Widad to explore her affinity for a variety of cuisines and imported products that have circulated on trade routes between the two continents for centuries.

Widad first began exploring traditional Lebanese cuisine at home with her mother. Every Sunday, after attending church service, she would be in the kitchen preparing the family lunch alongside her mom. From the age of 12, Widad felt the impact of war and calamity for 17 years. During those times, she was taught by her mother to have respect for food; to create no waste when preparing meals and to make the best out of the little that you might have. The lessons her mother taught her are still ingrained into her mind today.



At a later stage of her life, and with all the support and encouragement from her husband John, Widad finished 3 years of education with a dual degree in Culinary Arts and Pastry at [Sullivan University](#) in Louisville, Kentucky. The program teaches classic French technique, along with an advanced level of various other cuisines. Widad has a creative mind when it comes to developing flavors, and she began to blossom with [Rollin'](#)

[Gelato, Inc.](#), a successful artisan and handcrafted gelato and sorbet company in Kalamazoo, and soon-to-be in the Upper Peninsula, thanks again to the support of her family. With the gelato she creates from scratch, Widad is known for developing flavors that are bold and vibrant, yet balanced.

Starting June 26th, Widad will be taking a break from her gelato business and is pleased to offer you a taste of her roots, the Lebanese food she grew up with, all traditionally prepared from scratch. Join us for this special week, June 26th-30th, and you will have a peek at her creative mind, flavorful food, and a part of her soul. She likes to say to all our guests at Keweenaw Mountain Lodge, *Tafadalou Charfouna*, or “we welcome you”, please honor us with your presence.

Guest Chef Schedule: Widad Mueller

- Wednesday, June 26th, Dinner (5-9pm)
- Thursday, June 27th, Lunch and Dinner (11am -9pm)
- Friday, June 28th, Lunch, and Dinner (11am – 9pm); [Workshop](#) (10am – 12pm, \$50 registration required)
- Saturday, June 29th, Lunch and Dinner (11am – 9pm)
- Sunday, June 30th, Lunch and Dinner (11am – 7pm)

Guest Chef Menu: Widad Mueller, Lebanese Food

The menu that Widad has developed for the Guest Chef Week comprises items such as hummus, dolma, and monk’s eggplant, several Lebanese salads, and entrees that have beef, lamb, and fish. [[See Widad’s Lebanese-based Menu](#)]

As we enter the start of summer, we are looking forward to seeing our guests enjoy our new menu and guest chef specials. If you are interested in a certain menu flavor or influence, you can send us an email at info@keweenawresort.com! We are open to suggestions and love hearing from our guests.

