

Biography of Michael Allemeier CCC

Winery Chef at British Columbia's Mission Hill Family Estate



Photo By: Hamid Attie

Michael Allemeier has travelled the world learning his craft. Prior to joining Mission Hill Family Estate in July 2003, as Winery Chef, the 39-year-old adventurer had lived at 22 different addresses on three continents. Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, he moved with his family to Hong Kong where he was smitten with the culinary bug at age 11 after baking a birthday cake for his mother. He celebrated his 12th birthday in Winnipeg, Manitoba and by the tender age of 15, he had his first "official" job in the kitchen at that city's St. Boniface Golf and Country Club.

That experience led to work in Montreal, time spent as Executive Chef of Bishop's Restaurant in Vancouver, a stint as Executive Chef of Whistler's Wildflower Restaurant and a five-year term as Executive Chef at Teatro in Calgary. A certified Chef de Cuisine (CCC), Canada's highest professional culinary

accreditation designation, Allemeier is also a member of the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, a food and wine organization originally founded in Paris in 1248. He has taught at schools in Seattle, Vancouver and Calgary and appears in the internationally syndicated show entitled *Cooks like a Chef*, seen in Canada on the Food Network. In 1993, he had the honour of cooking for Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin during their Vancouver Summit Meeting.

In terms of a culinary philosophy, Allemeier insists his is very simple. He calls it seasonal and regional. Using the style, Cuisine de Terroir, his goal is to procure the best and freshest ingredients that are available locally and to allow the quality of those ingredients to speak for themselves. Well versed in all culinary disciplines, he has a special fondness for sauce work, cooking anything from the ocean and charcuterie (terrines and pâtés).

His approach to food and wine pairing is equally straightforward. When he creates a menu, he looks to enhance, compliment and occasionally contrast a pairing. Allemeier always begins with the wine. He then approaches local farmers and growers for ingredients. The rest is experimentation at its best. With every new vintage, recipes are re-designed and modified to ensure a perfect match. It's easy to see that food and wine are two of Allemeier's passions. Earlier in his career he and his wife Meredith worked

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the crush (grape harvest) for two seasons, leading them to travel the wine regions of California, Ontario, Germany, Italy and South Africa. That same passion is at the core of his culinary team building philosophy. Allemeier insists that apprentice cooks must have the right attitude. For him, it is more important than experience. He can teach anyone anything in the kitchen, but the candidate has to want to learn and develop first. He builds his team one cook at a time, looking for conviction, dedication and commitment.

Extra-curricular activities for Allemeier, his wife and young family, 8-year-old Colin and 3-year-old Lachlan, include camping and canoeing. He also loves to rock climb,

mountain bike and ski. At home, his favourite meal is Risotto. When asked why he chose Mission Hill and the Okanagan Valley, he responds that during his first visit he fell in love with the space and the place. He knew then that he wanted to be part of what he calls proprietor Anthony von Mandl's epic vision.

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For more information, please contact Mission Hill Family Estate by calling: 250-768-5125 or via e-mail at info@missionhillwinery.com.

