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Chef Cristina Mach

Chef Cristina Mach Brings Fine Dining to The Davis Community Campus

BY GEORGE CLARKE, PHOTOS BY MARK STEELMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

A tattoo inked in Latin, “Veni. Vidi. Vici.” perfectly describes Chef Cristina Mach’s passionate, straightforward approach to conquering challenges and achieving her goals: “I came. I saw. I conquered.”

Which explains why the recently hired chef for The Davis Community is a culinary crusader when it comes to creating healthy meals and preparing palate pleasing menus for residents on the Porters Neck campus.

Being raised in a traditional European family meant every meal was a special event and took hours to prepare, cook, and eat. Cristina was brought-up with a strong work ethic in a food culture that helped her develop a deep knowledge of European/Italian cuisine and a love for food.

After graduating with a degree in Hospitality Management, she ultimately decided “to stay in the kitchen and play with food.” Cristina moved to the U.S. 20-years ago for a successful career with the Marriott Hotels and Resorts where she had “the opportunity to travel all over Europe and the Caribbean learning about local foods and cultures.”

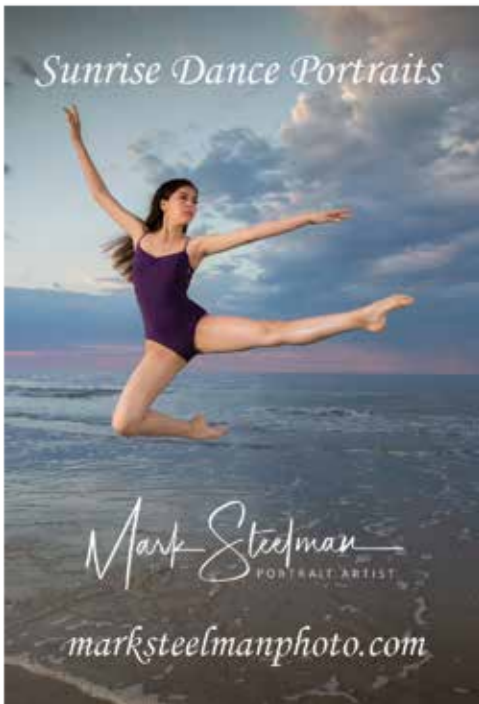
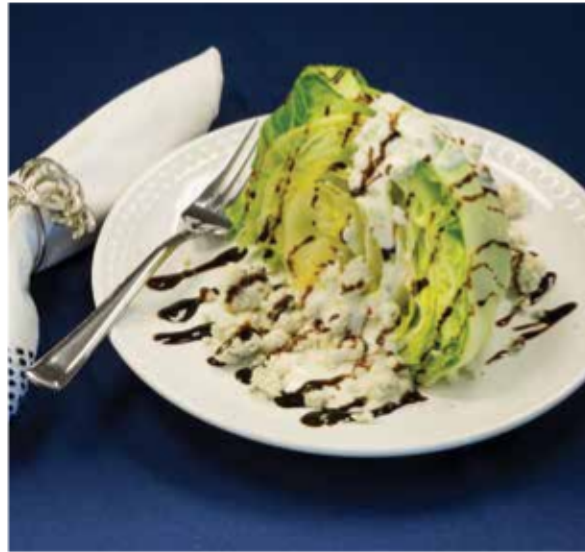
Her impressive resume includes experience working as the Food and Beverage Manager for the Marriott Hotel and Resort in Delray Beach, FL, serving as Front of House Manager and Sommelier at the Washington Duke and Country Club in Durham, working as the Food and Beverage Director/Service Culture Director for a Starwood Hotels and Resort in Dania Beach, FL, as well as Director of Dining Services for a premier independent living facility in Ft. Lauderdale.

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Christina presents one of many delicious new dishes on the menu at The Davis Community.





Cristina's diverse responsibilities have ranged from directing day-to-day operations for banquets, restaurant and room service, to wine pairings with food presentations, to determining the quality and quantity of food menus, training and managing teams to improve nutrition and customer satisfaction, and overseeing day-to-day operations in hotel restaurant and bar venues. A seasoned pro, she's constantly seeking to raise the level of culinary excellence where she works.

"I realized that my favorite place is in the kitchen, although I enjoy making aged bourbon in oak barrels, exotic cocktails and holding wine and food pairing events," she added. "My philosophy when it comes to food is to start with good ingredients that are fresh and organic," she explained. After conducting an analysis of The Davis Community dining services options, Chef Mach sought out local farmers and suppliers like Ward's Fruit and Produce based in Raleigh, NC to provide fresh and healthy, seasonal fruits and vegetables for residents on the campus, and to introduce new menu items with vegetarian and vegan recipes.

There's a lot to discover on the menu. She offers Southern style favorites, like chicken with waffles with a modern, healthy twist, and farm to table seasonal faire, as well as daily specials for Davis Community residents.

Chef Mach's gastronomic delights include appetizers of roasted local beets with herb-garlic goat cheese, drizzled with olive oil and balsamic glaze and a beautifully plated wedge salad with blue cheese dressing, blue cheese crumbs, and fig balsamic reduction.

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Her entrees include mouth-watering recipes for Atlantic Salmon prepared with a sweet and spiced pecan crust and Grand Marnier sweet potato; Filet mignon served with potato cake, herb butter, grilled asparagus and caramelized Roma tomato; and duck breast served with blackberries and a port wine compote.

Residents on campus now enjoy desserts like her freshly baked Berries Crostata.

While revamping menus and overseeing the preparation of these scrumptious meals for current residents, Chef Mach is getting ready for the opening of a new, upscale restaurant to serve residents of The Davis Community's independent living apartments and cottages in 2022.

Named for Champion Davis' mother, the menu at Cornelia's will please every palate when Chef Cristina serves up her crowd-

pleasing recipes. The Davis Community's new restaurant will serve residents on campus and also be open to the public next summer. Adding a chef of Cristina's caliber and experience is viewed as an perfect opportunity to attract neighbors in the surrounding community to Cornelia's to enjoy her gourmet meals, interact with residents on campus, and offer more opportunities for socialization for residents and their loved ones.

"She's a valued asset," said Marketing and Sales Director, Julie Lewis. "Cristina's varied background and approach to fine dining makes her a perfect choice for our campus."

"My life story is very straight forward. Work hard, be good with people, and do what you love," said Cristina.

Born to Romanian and Italian parents, Christina Mach came to America, discovered her passion and conquered challenges during her culinary career. But if asked what her mantra is, Chef Mach will say: "Eat well; and enjoy your loved ones every second because tomorrow is not promised to anyone."

Enticing Wilmington area foodies to visit the new restaurant is a challenge that Cristina is ready to conquer. A seasoned sommelier and experienced food and beverage manager, she's excited about the addition of a full bar in the restaurant and plans to introduce its own organic wine label. Chef Mach is currently creating a full menu of Southern-style entrees with fresh and seasonal ingredients and has plans for two soft openings to launch the restaurant on The Davis Community campus in late summer next year. ~

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