

Wow Your Guests With A Well Trained Staff : A Conversation with Marty Quinn

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Executive Chef Marty Quinn believes the old adage about giving a man a fish versus teaching him to fish. Which is why, as he heads into the busy season for the Hyatt Newport each spring, he looks to recruit seasonal staff from abroad or local culinary schools. So when he's not doing paperwork, he's on the line with his staff teaching them new skills.

“What I try to do more than actual work myself is go person by person and train them to do

things correctly,” he said. “It’s rewarding when you have a good day, but can be frustrating when you can see that they’re just not getting there.”

Since many of his seasonal staff come in with no culinary skills at all, training them is one of his most important challenges to overcome each year. With a core staff of two sous chefs and four supervisors, he relies on his year-round team to turn his seasonal staff of 15 to 25 prep and line cooks into culinarians.

When Quinn first came to the Hyatt Newport 13 years ago as a morning supervisor, he found himself giving a lot of proverbial fish to his co-workers. Over time, he realized that he wasn’t making the progress that he wanted and eventually, as he ascended to the Executive Chef position, which he’s held for three years, he learned that training is a key for success.

“A big challenge is having such a fluctuation of staff and keeping a consistent food quality while training new staff,” he said. “We pride ourselves on being a training facility.”

Along with facing the challenge of training, Quinn also faces a challenge from his guests, in having to present them with a meal that leaves them saying “wow,” whether in his banquet operations, his a la carte restaurants or at any of the off site events he oversees.

“A lot of the trends that I’ve seen are small portions,” he said. “It’s a cool concept for a few reasons – it saves on the amount of food that we put out and it makes you create food that is pungent and flavorful because they are only getting a small amount.”

Another way that Quinn wows his guests is trying to keep his menu items regionally focused and brought in from only a 100-mile radius. He changes his restaurant menus a few times each year to keep them seasonal and regionally focused; though he admits it can be harder for his banquet menu.

“We do one big banquet change each year,” he said. “With all the menus we’ve created over the years, there are numerous choices. We use a few companies that are very good at being able to offer products year round.”

With the Hyatt focused on becoming a resort destination where people would spend a week taking part in hotel-wide activities and enjoying the attractions of Newport, Quinn will have to continue to work hard to impress guests. With \$30 million in renovations over the last few years, and another \$25 million in work slated to be done, the hotel has already started its transformation into a world-class resort.

“My challenge is that I need to step up the quality of the food to match that,” he said.

