



*Chef Alec Clarke*

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# Expect the Unexpected from The Homestead's New Head Chef

The new food and beverage manager and head chef at The Homestead is, at 26, something of a culinary wunderkind. He was a chef supervisor by age 18, a restaurant manager by 21.

Now, Chef Alec Clarke is working to steer The Homestead's restaurant program back to its roots — as a homestead. The way his program will work, the produce might not be grown on site, but it likely will be sourced from the back of a pickup from a nearby farmer/grower. And communal gatherings will be a hallmark of events and regular service.

Watch this fall for a comeback of wine dinners but also the pairing of courses to craft cocktails. Nonna's will keep its Italian base (it means grandmother in Italian after all), but Clarke would like to see courses served more like they'd be in an Italian kitchen: family-style. Yet don't mistake communal for simple. The Chicago area native is classically trained with an affinity for French techniques, and he's looking to broaden the resort's appeal to diners of all ages with some culinary adventure.

*"My brand is introducing people to different things, things they might have never heard of but are going to like and love," said Clarke, who grew up vacationing in Leelanau County. "What's also part of my personal brand is that if we're going to do it, we're going to do it right. We're going to do it scratch-made, the whole nine yards."*



Look for more vegetarian offerings — a key food trend and personal cooking passion — on this fall's menus at both Nonna's and Whiskers. At Nonna's, try the rattatouille, a European take on seasonal vegetables. At cozy Whiskers, be ready to settle by one of the many fireplaces to enjoy southern comfort food, something he hasn't found locally. Clarke hopes to add southern-style mac and cheese, authentic fried chicken, maybe braised collard greens. And always end your meal with his specialty, crème brulee, ideally with family and friends.

*“I think the world is going through a transitional period, and what The Homestead's place in that is going to be,” he said, “is a rediscovery of traditions.”*