

Joe Opalewski

As a native Michigander, Joe's career started in Detroit with Carlson Restaurants Manager In Training Program before moving out west to Las Vegas to work for the Paris Las Vegas Casino, with Caesars Entertainment. Joe, the Casual Dining Director for Paris and Bally's Casinos, oversaw ten outlets and over \$35 million in annual revenues. After winning Caesars' Entertainment's company-wide Chairman's Award in the category of Innovation, Joe was promoted to Continuous Improvement Manager for Paris, Bally's and Planet Hollywood Casinos. In this role, he was responsible for process improvement, guest experience monitoring, and critical performance indicators for all resort departments. Joe also worked for Hard Rock Las Vegas before returning to Caesars Entertainment as the General Manager for Guy Fieri's Vegas Kitchen + Bar at The LINQ Casino.

After the COVID pandemic, Joe returned to Michigan and joined Davidson Hospitality and the Grand Hotel. During the winter months, Joe assisted at many of Davidson's other resorts, including Sheraton Coconut Beach in Kauai, The Islamorada Resort Collection in the Florida Keys, The Viking in Newport, Rhode Island, and the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Most recently, Joe was the Director of Food and Beverage and acting General Manager for The Singer Oceanfront Resort, a Curio by Hilton in the Palm Beach area, through its renovation.

When Joe is not working, he loves to be outdoors, hiking, biking, kayaking and staying in motion. His love for travel, both internationally and domestically, has allowed him to learn about different cultures and cuisines. He looks forward to sharing these experiences and breaking bread with the team, fostering a sense of connection and camaraderie.

Chef Adam Hightower

Hotel Investment Services (HIS) is pleased to welcome Adam Hightower as the new Corporate Executive Chef overseeing the Cotton Collection of hotels and restaurants in Northern Michigan. These include Pier Restaurant in Harbor Springs, Weathervane Restaurant in Charlevoix, Perry Hotel and Bay View Inn in Petoskey.

Adam is a highly skilled chef with strengths developed and honed under three Certified Master Chefs spanning twenty-five years in various and distinct venues, ranging from luxury hotels, including private country clubs, to fine and casual dining restaurants, casinos and properties with vast banquet facilities.

Adam's professional journey has taken him across the globe encompassing diverse culinary regions including stops in Hawaii, Hong Kong, Macau China, Texas, Oklahoma, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Florida, Long Island, and Michigan. His expertise, exposure and innovative approach are valuable assets to HIS and the food and beverage venues he oversees.

Chef Adam began his career on the north shore of one of Long Island's prestigious country clubs where he was immediately given the opportunity, as executive chef, to interact daily with members, cultivating a consistent pattern of leadership which was practiced and nurtured over the next two decades. At country clubs, luxury hotels and award-winning restaurants including Ritz Carlton, Bali By the Sea, PF Changs and The Hilton Hawaii Village Resort, he has established a proven and distinctive blend of creativity and passion for food that guests value.

Team culinary competitions have been one of Adam's most unique experiences during which he had to be meticulously detailed and adaptable to rapidly changing circumstances. These high-pressure competitions provided him with the experience of how to perform with consistent results which translates to exceptional dining experiences for members and guests.

Adam believes that creating a memorable dining experience for guests and keeping the guests' needs at the forefront are paramount. "My goal is to combine my extensive experience and passion for culinary arts to elevate the dining experience of every guest, ensuring each visit is unique and unforgettable," says Chef Adam. "I look forward to bringing my approach of combining innovative culinary techniques with locally sourced ingredients to the Cotton Collection."

With his vast experience and unwavering dedication, Adam Hightower is set to lead the Cotton Collection's culinary teams to new heights, promising an era of culinary excellence for Northern Michigan.

Katie Knoblock

Katie grew up in Port Austin, MI, working as a guide and horse trainer at her grandfather's riding stable. She spent her summers guiding trail rides through her family's property, learning the art of creating experiences and entertaining others. Katie spent most of her life planning to be a high school math teacher, but instead, fell in love with the service industry. After working at several restaurants, she was at the Royal Park Hotel in Rochester, MI. Katie worked her way up from a bartender/server to a Restaurant Manager. As a first-time manager, Katie was blessed to lead a very seasoned team at Royal Park, with a staff that allowed her to grow by learning and developing alongside several strong mentors who supported her journey. With the knowledge and experience gained, Katie was very excited to take this opportunity at The Pier and lead this iconic property into the 2025 season.

Katie looks forward to seeing what Northern Michigan offers and connecting with all the people who make this area great. In her downtime, she enjoys playing golf and going home to ride her favorite horse, Mya.