

The Journal Times

MAKE A CONNECTION

Get This Job: Executive Chef

Matthew Bennett, The Waterfront Restaurant in Burlington, WI 53105

**By Elizabeth Young
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"A lot of what I do can be learned through on-the-job training and time in the industry. Experience can be the best teacher."-Matthew Bennett, Executive Chef, The Waterfront.

Matthew Bennett of Burlington is the executive chef at The Waterfront, 31100 Weller Road, Burlington.

AGE: 31

EDUCATION: "I earned an associate's degree in culinary arts from Johnson & Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1999. "

BRIEF WORK HISTORY: "I started at George Webb's in Burlington in 1994; my first job. I've worked all over - at chain restaurants like Dave and Buster's and Applebee's and supper clubs in Wisconsin, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. I've worked as a dining and restaurant manager in many different hotel establishments."

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES: "At The Waterfront, I oversee all the ordering of the food for the restaurant and do all the staff schedules, as well as the booking of all parties, banquets and special events."

EDUCATION/TRAINING REQUIRED: "Education helps, but it's not essential. A lot of what I do can be learned through on-the-job training and time in the industry. Experience can be the best teacher."

SALARY RANGE: "It depends on where you work. I'd say \$25,000 to \$55,000 annually, but it can be higher if one owns their own restaurant or works in a higher-end establishment."

WHAT TYPE OF HOURS YOU WORK: "11 in the morning to 10 at night, six days a week. It's really just part of the job. Do I wish there were better hours? Yes."

BEST PART OF THE JOB: "Seeing people's faces when their food goes in front of them and they're wowed by it. The enjoyment I get from helping people, like with the Special Olympics Wine Tasting that we hold in January. You also meet a lot of different and interesting people."

WORST PART OF THE JOB: "The holidays. You have to work almost all of them. You don't get to spend as much time with your family. It's part of the job, but that doesn't mean I like it. It's something you've got to be willing to deal with." Biggest stressor? "The busy time when your restaurant is full of people and you've got 40 orders sitting in front of you and you've got to get it done as fast as you can and make sure the food is still excellent."

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BIGGEST SOURCE OF ON-THE-JOB STRESS: "The rush hours... the busy time when your restaurant is full of people and you've got 40 orders sitting in front of you and you've got to get it done as fast as you can and make sure the food is still excellent."

HOW YOU UNWIND: "I relax at home in front of the TV and just kind of veg at the end of the night. I usually have a snack or a drink and try to let go of the worries of the day. I also spend a lot of time with my girlfriend and her daughter."

HOW SOMEONE ELSE CAN GET THIS JOB: "They've got to start small and work their way up. You need to work in a place and get some experience. There are plenty of local colleges where someone can study culinary, too."