

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

A NEW TASTE FOR ADVENTURE AT VILLA PORTOFINO

Culinary Expert Chef Gavin Grabe Named New Executive Chef at Villa Portofino

Palm Desert, CA (June 8, 2017)—Villa Portofino is pleased to announce the appointment of Chef Gavin Grabe as executive chef.

Chef Gavin was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, into a family of foodies. His first teachers were his mother and grandmother, both phenomenal home cooks, and an uncle and cousin who both own their own restaurants. He graduated from Wits University, Hotel School in Johannesburg in 1994, where he received a degree in catering management as well as obtaining an award for the highest achievement ever awarded at his alma mater for the studies of practical kitchen management.

After only one year of employment in South Africa, Chef Gavin took a bold step, moving across continents to London. He spent the next six years working in many restaurants, private members clubs and cafes in London, learning the ins and outs of the food industry. He also obtained a certification in financial planning but found stocks and bonds uninspiring and headed back into the kitchen.

When an opportunity to work on Corsica as a private chef came up, Chef Gavin felt torn between his career in restaurant kitchens and his desire to see the world. Choosing to sacrifice his place at J Sheekey, he headed off for what turned out to be a seven-year gastronomic dream cooking all over the world from the French Riviera to the remote Scottish Highlands, old towns in rugged Mallorca and Rome.

Regarding his travels, he says, “Having to plan my menus from local markets conditioned me to cook according to the seasons and to what was fresh at the markets, and I soon developed a taste for simple European cuisine.”

He soon ascended the ladders and became private chef to British rock and pop stars, the British Queens personal family, American politicians, movie stars, famous artists and some eccentric dilettantes.

When Chef Gavin moved to the US in 2007, he opened his own cake company making all kinds of desserts and cakes in Los Angeles. He broadened this by joining an up-and-coming catering company as their Pastry Chef but was soon promoted to Chef de Cuisine.

When asked why he moved here, he says, “I did my time in the UK with the wet weather and grey skies. California is the most beautiful state and offers me a climate I am more accustomed to – besides, America truly is the land of liberty.”

Five years later an opportunity opened for a Chef de Cuisine in the Coachella Valley at a restaurant and market called Clementine. Always wanting to live in the desert, Gavin jumped at the opportunity and was immediately hired. The continental European flair mirrored his experience and was a perfect match. Clementine soon became a popular destination.

In 2015, Kitchen Kitchen in Indian Wells was searching for a chef and a chance meeting put them together. Chef Gavin joined owner Jan Boydston as her Executive Chef and soon amassed a following of regulars and foodies alike while teaching cooking classes and culinary techniques as well as hosting private events.

“It is a great opportunity for me to join the Villa Portofino Clubhouse team. I look forward to building the restaurant by introducing many of my own recipes as well as traditional ones, getting to know the residents and their needs and having some fun along the way. I’d love to add food tastings, cooking classes, specialty evenings and my desserts.

I look forward to meeting you at Villa Portofino Clubhouse.

Bon Appétit,

Executive Chef Gavin Grabe”