

THE CHEFS OF WINE & DINE WISCONSIN

A Weekly Feature



Chef Nicolas Ramos

Antigua Latin Restaurant

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"The Chefs of Wine & Dine Wisconsin" features a new Wine & Dine Wisconsin chef each week. Learn their kitchen tips and cooking secrets every Wednesday in the Food section, then plan to meet them, sample their creations and see many of them cook on one of the Wine & Dine Wisconsin stages Oct. 2 and 3 at the Frontier Airlines Center.

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Featured Chef Nicolas Ramos, Antigua

Nicolas Ramos, owner and chef at Antigua in West Allis, is a student of his profession. He researches food and ingredients to find new and better ways to create dishes. "I love to see the history of food and how recipes were developed," he says.

The restaurant specializes in traditional Mexican food and dishes from Latin America and Spain. But as Ramos likes to say, "We kick it up! We do dishes that have become very popular, like Venezuelan coconut shrimp and a Peruvian beef with onion, tomatoes and peppers."

Originally from Queretaro, in Central Mexico, Ramos has owned the restaurant with his wife, Citlali, for five years. And although he is self-taught, he has vast resources at his disposal. "Both my in-laws are professional chefs," he says. "You grow to love this business. It's very rewarding to see your food make people happy."

Ramos also loves to pair and incorporate wine into his dining selections. All the restaurant wines have Latin origins.

Don't miss Ramos at this fall's Wine and Dine Wisconsin when he plans to share a delicious dish with attendees that will honor his heritage.

Wine and Dine Wisconsin asked Chef Nicolas Ramos...

What is your earliest childhood memory of cooking?

"I remember helping my mother make mole. Smelling the tomatoes and chilies – those are aromas you never forget."

What do you love most about your job? "There are so many aspects of owning a restaurant. I like learning, creating and improving dishes."

What ingredients do you always have on hand at home?

"There is always olive oil, cilantro, basil, cheeses, onion and tomato. With that, I can make something delicious."

Do you have a never-miss dish? "My Lomo Saltado. It's a Peruvian dish made with salted beef strips with red onions and tomatoes cooked in Marsala wine and served with rice."

What do you like to do when you're not at the restaurant?

"I like spending time with my family. I also like to research food and recipes to see where they come from and their role in a culture."