

The Yellowwood: Five-Course Dining at Ivy Tech

Students Provide Upscale Dining Experience at The Yellowwood

White linen tablecloths, elegant tableware, and soothing candles adorn tables.

Natural light streams through the windows to brighten the cozy dining room with wooden floors and tones of green and cream, colors associated with Ivy Tech Community College. Students, dressed in crisp white shirts and black pants and aprons, wait on diners, while other students wearing chef's coats prepare elaborate five-course meals.

This is The Yellowwood, the upscale, fine-dining experience at Ivy Tech Community College Bloomington. Located on the campus' north side, The Yellowwood serves lunch on most Wednesdays during fall and spring semesters. The restaurant acts as a teaching opportunity for students under the direction of Chef Tad DeLay, a professional chef and an Ivy Tech assistant professor. He and his wife, Linda, formerly owned Opie Taylor's and Limestone Grille in Bloomington.

"It's giving students real-world experience in service and working in the kitchen," says DeLay, who has cooked professionally since 1976. "They find out what they will experience when they get a job.

It's not all like what they see on TV and the Food Network. There's a lot of hard work."

The experience makes students more marketable, says DeLay. "After graduating, they get jobs as line cooks, or sous chefs if they're very good," he says. DeLay adds that students have gotten jobs at One World Catering & Events, the former Restaurant Tallent, Feast Bakery Cafe, and Topo's 403, among others.

During the fall semester, DeLay says French cuisine dishes are served, following the recipes of French Chef Auguste Escoffier. In the spring, dishes originating from many countries, including Spain, Vietnam, and China, will be featured. DeLay, who prepares the menu, says dishes are in keeping with students' instruction each semester.

Students earning associate degrees in hospitality administration, with concentrations in culinary arts, take DeLay's cooking classes along with customer service classes taught by instructor Eric Daniels Howe. As part of their classes, students work in the restaurant on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Before The Yellowwood opened, students worked at Ivy Tech's former Crossroads Café, also under DeLay's supervision, at the



(top) Dennis McGuire enjoyed dining in the former Ivy Tech student-run restaurant, Crossroads Café; (bottom) Ivy Tech culinary arts graduate Adrian Smith is now an executive chef at DeAngelo's in Bloomington. (opposite page) Chef Tad DeLay (left) with current student Rob Stratton in the Ivy Tech kitchen. Photos by Martin Boling

Liberty Crossing campus.

One of the café's customers, Dennis McGuire, a partner with BKD, LLP, says he thoroughly enjoyed a fine dining experience there last October. "The staff were all very courteous and attentive to our needs. Clearly, it was a learning environment for students, but they were well-prepared," McGuire says. "The French cuisine was excellent,

too. It was just very first-class and elegant."

Adrian Smith, a 2014 Ivy Tech graduate, was among students who benefitted from working at Crossroads Café while earning his hospitality administration degree. He's now executive chef at DeAngelo's in Bloomington. In 2012, Smith switched careers, moved to Bloomington, and enrolled in



the culinary arts program.

"I had always loved cooking," says Smith, who practiced law for six years. "It was my escape when I had a lousy day. I discovered I really enjoy this more than what I was doing."

Before enrolling at Ivy Tech, Smith tried to get a cook's job, but says managers didn't take him seriously since he didn't have culinary education. But after he enrolled and got experience at Crossroads Café, doors started opening and he got jobs at the former Taco Rocket and One World Catering. "Ivy Tech's program definitely set me on the right path," says Smith. "I learned more about the value of cooking fresh and doing everything the right way. The school really emphasized that."

After 10 years of automotive work, Rob Stratton, of Bloomington, also found a new career through Ivy Tech's culinary arts program and work at Crossroads Café. "It helped me gain valuable experience

for what I wanted to do, which is catering."

Stratton, a 2015 graduate, says his work at the café showed him how the service and kitchen staffs collaborate. "For someone who had little restaurant experience, it was kind of intimidating at first. But once you get used to the flow, it's a wonderful experience," he says. In March 2015, even before he graduated from the program, Stratton was hired by One World Catering as a prep cook. "Enrolling in Ivy Tech was a good move for me," Stratton says. "Now, I come home with a smile on my face."

The Yellowwood is open from 11 a.m. to about 1 p.m. and seats 45 people inside and 24 outside. Reservations are required, and meals cost \$15. Reservations can be made by contacting Mike Case at ccase10@ivytech.edu or by calling 812-330-6381. For the most up-to-date information about The Yellowwood visit ivytech.edu/yellowwood. •

ADVERTISEMENT



THE Yellowwood

Ivy Tech culinary arts students prepare and serve five course meals in The Yellowwood, located at Ivy Tech Community College, open select Wednesdays throughout the fall and spring semesters. The menu is International or Classical French Cuisine but call ahead for details. The cost is \$15 and only cash is accepted.

**Location: Ivy Tech
Community College
200 Daniels Way
Bloomington, IN 47404**

**Please enter through the
Cook Pavilion on the North
side of the building.**



**Reservations are required:
(812) 330-6381.
ivytech.edu/yellowwood**