

epicurious catering for the masses (really)

Holly Fraughton - Pique News Magazine

Imagine serving dinner to a crowd of 2,500 people, or lunch for 4,500. The mere thought of pulling off such a feat would widen most peoples' eyes in sheer terror.

Well, Joshua Hendin has done it.

Hendin is the owner and operator of Treeline Catering, an Ontario-based company that is soon expanding its reach to the Sea to Sky region, opening an office in Squamish.

Hendin is also an ex-Whistlerite, living in the area for about three years, and tending bar at Buffalo Bill's and The Bearfoot Bistro during his time here. "Like many young people, I started out as a bartender... so that's how it started," he explained. "Essentially, since I was 15 or 16, I've been involved in the food service industry in one way or another."

During spring season, when jobs had dried up a bit and things were getting quiet around town, Hendin was offered the opportunity to become a one-third owner in a catering company in southern Ontario, and he jumped at it.

"At that point, I was tired of being a broke ski bum — as much as I miss it so much now," he said with a laugh. The business took off, and Hendin threw himself into the job. He eventually sold out of that company and started his own, Treeline Events, last fall. Treeline caters events as small as 50 people, but the company's specialty is large-scale functions, which Hendin considers to be groups of over 1,000. "One of Treeline's very first events was one of the largest in the country, and of course, I'm very proud of that," he said, adding that a staff of 130 served a group of 2,500 for a plated dinner at a private residence in London, Ontario this past summer.

"It was one hell of an undertaking," he admitted. "It was one of the most intense events I've ever done."



• Treeline Catering •

“One of?” Wow.

While many of Treeline’s clients are corporate, they also offer their services for smaller functions and weddings. But it was really while organizing and executing the large-scale events that Hendin began to notice just how wasteful the catering industry could be. He says that two of the main food suppliers in Canada tend to overpackage their products, and have to transport their products long-distance. For example, when Treeline prepares its popular wild Pacific salmon with spring onion and maple-ginger glaze for an event, they end up with loads of thick, plastic wrapping from a case of individually quick frozen (IQF) cuts.

“By the time you’ve opened and prepared a case of salmon, which I believe is roughly 20 to 30 pieces, you’re looking at a full garbage can of waste,” he said. “It’s astonishing, really.”

So, Hendin decided to make sure that every choice that Treeline Events makes is as kind to the environment as possible, without sacrificing the quality of their product or the nature of the event as a whole. While he admits that Treeline still has to draw on the big food suppliers when they have to, they try and purchase products from local suppliers as much as possible to minimize transportation and packaging. They use biodegradable soaps in their kitchen, carefully sort the trash after their events, and offer alternative, ecologically friendly products, like corn-based plates and cutlery, and wild instead of farmed meats, to their clients.

Treeline Events will be launching their B.C. events and operations in just a few weeks. For more information on the company, visit www.treeline-catering.com.

