

IN SEASON

Summer

Tableau's Executive Chef
Marc-André Choquette Talks

RESTAURANTS VANCOUVER ISLAND

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After graduating from culinary school in Montreal, Marc-André Choquette staged in Normandy at the two-Michelin-starred Restaurant Gill, where he acquired a taste of brigade service and Relais Gourmand standards. Then he shipped out West and bounced around Vancouver's top restaurants, spending time as a young sous chef at Lumière under Rob Feenie and at West under David Hawksworth before being head-hunted to run the restaurant at the Loden Hotel. At Tableau, his menu relies on French bistro classics and fresh, local ingredients, which means that in summer Choquette cooks with buoyant herbs like basil, sourced from nearby farms.

How to Buy Choquette gets his basil from Sapo Bravo, an organic farm in Lytton, B.C. (find them at

Trout Lake Farmer's Market where the hot, dry weather produces leaves that are rich in flavourful oil. "When they bring us bunches in early July, it's always the best—hearty, sturdy, and very fragrant, with vibrant green leaves that stay very crisp in the fridge for almost a week."

How to Use It For summer, chef Choquette does a fresh heirloom-tomato salad with basil, or a pistou (the French version of pesto made with garlic, cheese, and pine nuts and used as a marinade or condiment). He also does a flatbread with basil, and a gnocchi with mushrooms, tomato, and basil cream sauce. He loves that basil's flavor is fragrant and soft; not too strong, but always adding a defining character to simple dishes.

✦ **Video.vanmag.com** for a recipe and video of Marc-André Choquette making summery basil soup

