







Natalia Machado: Today's Notable Young Professional

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Today's Notable Young Entrepreneur is Montreal-based chef Natalia Machado, who's been crowned America's Sweet Genius and won the Food Network's Chopped competition. Natalia can also be seen hosting the very first episode of One World Kitchen on the new Canadian food and lifestyle channel Gusto TV...

Elevator Pitch: Describe your job in a nutshell.

A rollercoaster of constant ups and ups. Fun manageable chaos.

Why did you start working at your company?

After years of working in New York, I was ready for a new challenge. When I was approached by Ville-Marie Collection, I was enraptured by the vision that the partners had for bringing authentic Argentinean fare to Montreal. It was a unique opportunity to set a precedent in such a cultural mosaic as Montreal.

What was the inspiration for this career route?

I grew up in a busy kitchen, where very strong women had taken the lead. It only felt natural the first time that I set foot in a professional kitchen. It took one Saturday night shift to drop medical school and make cooking my chosen path.

What is the best part of what you do on a day-to-day basis?

The constant interaction with my staff and the feeling of being chosen to cook for my guests, especially when there are so many wonderful restaurants in Montreal.

The most challenging part?

Finding balance between spending quality time with my family and making sure that I am sufficiently present at the restaurant.

What is one sign that you've seen over the years to suggest that your work/life balance is off?

The lack of sleep and the occasional unfounded midnight epiphany that I forgot to place an order for the restaurant.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

Definitely in Montreal. I have found a home here.

What is one major challenge that you've had to overcome in your career?

Being accepted and taken seriously as a woman in a male-driven industry.

How did you overcome it?

By working twice as hard and showing that I could handle pressure.

What does success look like to you? Does Money = Happiness?

If I'm as excited to go back to work the next day as I was that first Saturday shift, then I feel successful. Money doesn't equal happiness. Money equals effort being paid off.

What is the most memorable milestone in your career?

When I was made a chef owner at L'Atelier d'Argentine.

Do you have any advice for other young professionals?

Pursue your dreams and be careful to wish for.

Where is your favourite place to wine/ dine in your city and why?

My home. I don't get to do it often, but when I do, it's the best setting.

When you're not working how do you love to spend your "Me" time?

With my two kids and my husband.

Where is your favourite place to travel? Why?

Argentina. Why? Why not!

If you had to choose a theme song, what would it be?

Blackbird by the Beatles.

If you weren't doing what you're doing, what would you be doing?

I would be a pediatrician.

Do you support any charities? If so, which one(s) and why is that important to you?

I am involved in Table of Hope and Casino Against Cancer, but I will support as many charities as I can. I believe in all causes. Anything that I can do to make a difference and that is in my power to do, I will.

What to you is notable?

Notable is the perfection of a fruit picked at the perfect point of sweetness. Notable is the exact use of spice on a dish. Notable is recognizing that the simplest thing can make anything notable.

Blackberry, iPhone, Android, or Other?

iPhone.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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