

Fabian Forlini

For this general manager, there's a new love in town

By Kiko Miyasato

Tucked away inside MGM Grand is Crush, an eatery that is quickly becoming the go-to dining spot for celebrities, visitors and locals alike. At the helm of Michael and Jenna Morton's new shared-plates concept is general manager Fabian Forlini. "What Michael likes to emphasize to the staff is to have fun with the guests," said the Toronto native. "People are here to have a good time."

Crush perfectly balances the elements of Bohemian vibe and posh eatery. "People can come and kick back. But we do provide that fine-dining service," Forlini said. And he certainly knows fine dining. Forlini has served in management positions at some of the most exclusive spots in town. But it's at Crush that he has felt the most at home. "I've been to a lot of restaurants in this town, even around the world, and none of them are like this," he said. It might be because it reminds him a lot of his own experiences with food. Both his parents were born and raised in Italy, made their way to Canada and then to Florida, and food always played a big role in the family's life, from gatherings around the dinner table to owning restaurants.



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"(Eating) is a gathering. It's time to get together and share in the day or week, over food. And that's what we like to do here at Crush; that's what we're trying to accomplish here. ... We're a gathering place, and we want people to feel that same way, at home."



Passionfruit Pucker

Crush has several specialty drinks on its cocktail menu. "You're not going see them on any other cocktail menu in the city. They're specially crafted just for Crush." Helping to put the menu together is bartender John O'Donnell, well-known in the local food and beverage industry. Or, as Forlini said, "He's not a mixologist, he's our fun-ologist!" A popular pick on the menu is the Passionfruit Pucker, mixed with La Diablada pisco, Alizé Gold Passion passion fruit liqueur, fresh-squeezed lime juice, pineapple juice, simple syrup and a spray of bitters.