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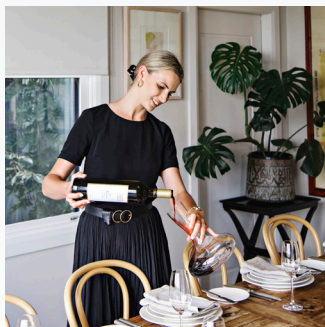
# Nathaniel Destefano and Chloe Foster

NATHANIEL: HEAD CHEF, THE ZIN HOUSE  
CHLOE: RESTAURANT MANAGER, THE ZIN HOUSE

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“The move back to Mudgee after years of travelling and experiencing fast-paced and stressful hospitality roles, most recently in Melbourne, has provided us with a far greater work-life balance. While we are still busy, we’re busy in a better way and have more time to stop and reflect on our daily successes, more so than when we were working longer and more frantic hours.”

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**When you leave a country town as a young person to seek a better career, the bright lights and pull of the general big city scene, it's hard to imagine that you will ever make the call to return again.**

**However, this is exactly what Nathaniel and Chloe did and they haven't looked back since.**



**Nathaniel Destefano and Chloe Foster – formerly of Melbourne**

## BACKGROUND

Working respectively as a Chef and Restaurant Manager in the fast-paced world of the Melbourne hospitality scene, Nathaniel and Chloe thought they had all the professional stimulation they needed.

The buzz of working within George Calombaris' prestige restaurants, and sometimes cooking for up to 750 people per day and working from 6am–2am, was one that Nathaniel and Chloe enjoyed for many years.

However, when circumstances changed and they had time to stop and reflect on what it was they were actually getting out of their work and lifestyle, Nathaniel and Chloe began to wonder if the grass was perhaps a little greener elsewhere, and that a better balance could be achieved between professional stimulation and life outside work.

So when the job for Head Chef at The Zin House came up back in the town from which both Nathaniel and Chloe originated, they decided to touch base with owners Kim Currie and David Lowe to see what could happen.

Nathaniel was really happy to see that the foodie culture in Mudgee, where he originally began his apprenticeship, was not only good, it was burgeoning with passionate individuals like Kim Currie.

## WHY MUDGEE?

Having been born in Mudgee, both Nathaniel and Chloe knew that the Mudgee Region was beautiful and offered a relaxed lifestyle.

It had been years since they had spent any length of time in the region though, and they were unsure what to expect. Would the slower pace of life suit them or would they become restless? To the contrary, both Nathaniel and Chloe found that they could still be very busy professionally, and continually enthused by their new role at The Zin House, with more time to do things together as well.

Having access to a fresh, seasonal garden on the doorstep of the restaurant with which to create beautiful dishes and menus is a privilege and something that was not available to Nathaniel in Melbourne.

Both Nathaniel and Chloe believe that they are better able to create relationships with The Zin House's patrons. The Zin House is like no other restaurant they have ever worked in. Service is relaxed and whilst still proficient, the daily pressure for the couple is less.

At the end of service there is often time to stop and relax with the team over a coffee or wine, and reflect on the day's success, before continuing on to do something together with the hours that remain in the day. This was something almost unheard of with the hours they worked in Melbourne.

## CAREERS AND LIFESTYLE

Nathaniel and Chloe have every intention of buying a home in Mudgee and starting their own family.

They feel that their return to the region has allowed them to enjoy their relationship even more and given them time to make plans for their future.

The hours that they now work in comparison to those in Melbourne are vastly different, with shorter days and generally only two nights a week taken up at The Zin House, leaving time for them to enjoy dining out around the region.

Now that they see their future is bright, stimulating and full of quality lifestyle options, they would both love to see more hospitality professionals make Mudgee their home.

Access to experienced hospitality staff and like-minded hospitality professionals would be great and they even go as far as to hope for further injections into the Mudgee Region's restaurant scene and more restaurants starting up in the future.

Mudgee's ever-increasing popularity with tourists and prosperous local community (who appreciate good food to go with their great wine), makes the region an attractive prospect for those who want to create a great future for themselves in the region's restaurant scene.



## THE ZIN HOUSE

The modern farmhouse restaurant takes in sweeping views of the certified organic and biodynamic Tinja property, nestled among classic Mudgee hillsides and Lowe vineyards.

The extensive kitchen gardens, orchards and grazing farmland welcome on arrival and form the basis of the experience at Zin House. What they don't grow themselves they source from neighbours and producers across the region.

The dining experience is designed to reflect things that are held dear – taking time over good food and wine with those cared about, service that is warm and personable but not obtrusive, comforts with a little luxury and never ever having a time limit on your table. The pace is relaxed, with time to wander the extensive food gardens or watch the sun set over the Mudgee hills. The food and courses are plentiful, five full courses showcasing seasonal produce grown in the kitchen gardens or sourced across the region. Prepared by head chef Nathaniel Destefano, the food continues Zin's guiding principles of authenticity, generosity and quality – balanced with his refined and technique driven approach.