

Food for thought – try being a chef

THIS week we speak to Eric Hlatshwayo, one of the chefs at Tintswalo at Waterfall, a five-star hotel near Kyalami, north of Joburg. He tells us that there is more to being a chef than preparing scrumptious meals – there's also a lot of paperwork.

What does your company do?

I am based at Tintswalo at Waterfall, an intimate boutique hotel that caters mainly for the corporate market. This can range from conferencing to corporate events, cocktail parties and weddings, as well as day-to-day breakfast, lunch and dinner.

What do you do?

I'm an executive chef and my main focus is to manage the kitchen effectively, including looking after stock-taking, orders, rostering of staff, and making sure the kitchen is making a profit.

What does a typical day at work entail?

To start my shift, I look at the day-sheets and the bookings. I must ensure that there



PREPARED: Tintswalo chef Eric Hlatshwayo

is plenty of stock available. Most of my day is spent on preparations.

With a large variety of food options on the a la carte menu, it is very important to be prepared, whether for large bookings or unexpected walk-in guests.

The kitchen must be prepared at all times.

What has been your highlight since joining the company?

It was when I had to host lunch for, and got to meet, former president Nelson Mandela at Tintswalo.

What did you do before?

I worked for a small restaurant as a chef.

What challenges do you face?

Maintaining the food cost. Also, handling staff can sometimes be challenging.

What do you like and dislike about your job?

There is nothing that I really dislike about my job, but it's very demotivating when you get negative feedback from guests.

What did you study?

I didn't formally study through any institute, but managed to study through the companies I worked for.

If you were not doing this, what would you be doing?

I'm not really sure. I might have started my own food business.

Do you have any advice for young people who would like to follow in your footsteps?

Don't give up and always try your best in whatever you do. You can reach your dream if you put your mind to it. Learn from others.