

# Andrew Balick

## Class of 2000

Andrew Balick discovered his passion for cuisine early on in his college career. Today, Balick serves as executive chef and partner at Tapco Restaurant Group, which includes Tap 42 and Bar Rita. He prides himself on a career founded not on a pursuit of solely financial success, but rather one of personal betterment and authenticity. Balick studied nutrition and food science at the University of Florida, and during his time in college, worked in the kitchens of a Gainesville restaurant. His first night there, scrubbing pots and working the fryer, was enough to solidify his love for the restaurant environment. The experience set in motion his journey toward culinary excellence.

Balick continued his education in the culinary arts program at Johnson & Wales University in North Miami. Soon after, became chef de partie—and later sous chef—at the acclaimed Azul Restaurant at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. He continued his work at Azul Restaurant for six years before teaming up with a private hotel owner on South Beach, where he launched an intimate and authentic fine dining restaurant called Pied a Terre. Moved by a desire for a larger-scale hotel restaurant experience, Balick worked for the Ritz-Carlton Group as chef de cuisine at the Dilido Beach Club at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel and, subsequently, chef de cuisine at the Ritz-Carlton in Fort Lauderdale at the Via Luna restaurant.

In April of 2013, Balick was approached by the owners of Tap 42, a high-end Fort Lauderdale gastropub, which led to his decision to exit the hotel culinary scene and enter the private sector with the Tapco Restaurant Group. Currently, there are nine Tap 42 Craft Kitchen & Bar locations across South Florida and one currently under construction. Under Balick's culinary direction as executive chef, Tap 42 remains at the forefront of the craft beer industry and features rare brews, handcrafted cocktails, and elevated gastropub fare.

He personally coordinates all faculty, staff, and alumni gatherings and reunions hosted at his restaurants, so it's common to see NSU University School community members gathered at one of Tap 42's locations or at partner restaurant Bar Rita in Fort Lauderdale. As part of his mission to give back to the community, Balick helped to introduce Tap 42's year-round "Cocktails for a Cause" initiative. Proceeds from featured cocktails are donated to local community organizations.

Balick attended USchool from first grade through high school graduation and distinctly remembers always being challenged academically. In retrospect, he credits USchool with setting him up for success and is grateful for the foundation it provided. He learned that through tenacity, desires and dreams can become achievements. Today, he keeps in touch with many members from the class of 2000. "It's interesting to see that many of my classmates now have great careers and are on the path of success," Balick said. "In fact, it seems to be the norm for NSU University School graduates, which is quite remarkable. USchool should be proud."