

HEALTHY CHEF CHALLENGE COMPETITOR

Professional Division



CHEF

GABRIEL PADILLA

As the owner and chef of Rustico, a Spanish-Italian restaurant, Chef Gabriel Padilla brings the Mediterranean to life right here in Oak Park. The restaurant opened just over a year ago, and has grown—landing a spot in the 55 Best Small Towns to Visit on a Road Trip of America by *Auto Accessories Garage* and a feature in the *Chicago Tribune*.

With over 28 years of experience in the food industry, Padilla began his journey working for Oggi Trattoria, Piccolo Sogno, and Café Iberico—well know Spanish and Italian restaurants in Chicago. It has been Padilla's dream to own his own restaurant—and now that dream came true in the development of Rustico. Padilla sets his restaurant apart by fusing the best of both of Italian and Spanish cuisine, serving Spanish tapas, wood-fired pizzas, and homemade pastas.

Rustico, even though new to town, has partnered with several local charities and organizations. Chef Gabriel will continue that trend, representing one of 3 competing professional chefs for Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry's first ever Healthy Chef Challenge.