

# Faces Of New Bedford #242: Manny Hernandez

Meet Manny Hernandez, the 29-year-old executive chef, and part-owner of Barrels & Boards in Raynham, MA.

Manny was born in Puerto Rico and grew up as a child there until the age of eleven. His mother unfortunately had come down with a health condition and her best outlook had her moving to the United States with a family member until she got better. Manny was eleven years old and spoke no English. He would follow his mother to the United States, moving with his sisters, arriving in New Bedford in June 2004.



Manny attended school in New Bedford and got his first job when he was 16 as a dishwasher at Nephews in Freetown. After working hard, Ron saw his work ethic and desire to learn and gave him a shot as a line cook where he'd stay for another year and a half.

Manny's next job would be under Chef Kevin Gibbons at UMass Dartmouth. During the first year, Chef Gibbons observed Manny working with him and told him he could see his potential for being an excellent cook and that could go far if he got

serious about learning. With a passion for the kitchen, he seized this opportunity, learning everything he could.

Umass being a school meant Manny would find himself jobless during the summer, so he picked up a job at the Waterfront Grille, where he began learning from new chefs. He bounced between Umass during the school year and the Waterfront Grille for a few years, until taking a full-time sous chef position. He worked hard and paid attention to food costs and how to manage a successful kitchen for two years until his own opportunity came up where he took over as head chef for the Waterfront Grille.

He took on the new role as head chef and ran with it, his continued success found him an opportunity to open a new restaurant with his own designed menu, at a new place being opened called the Charred Oak Tavern where he spent 2 1/2 years making it a huge success. This got him noticed again, and he was approached with an opportunity that he couldn't pass on opening yet another new restaurant called Barrels & Boards.

Manny continued on his path to success at the new restaurant, working hard as he always had, showing he was invaluable. This time, the new opportunity was to become a business partner at Barrels & Boards. His passion and dedication in the kitchen have continuously paid off and now his future also includes building a brand to a point where it can continue to expand.

Manny acknowledges the hard work he put in with different jobs and under different chefs has really helped his career get to where it's at today, but more so his strength comes from his family who supports him and has made the long hours work, and the people who work with him in the kitchen. At least a dozen staff members put their faith and careers in his hands and have followed him from one kitchen to another because they see his dedication to not only doing a good job but making sure they're learning and on a successful path to make a similar

journey that he's had.

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*Faces of New Bedford is a New Bedford Guide project being undertaken by Josh Souza. If you'd like to nominate someone or ask a question you can inquire with him through email at [josh@newbedfordguide.com](mailto:josh@newbedfordguide.com).*

Faces of New Bedford began as a project by Colton Simmons. You can find Colton on Instagram: <https://instagram.com/simmonscolton>.