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Executive Chef Jonathan Dunn, with his wife, Kimberly, who is director of marketing, talks about his catering company.

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NORWELL — Jonathan Dunn, owner of the Lavishly Dunn catering and event planning company, has been working with food for 16 years — and he's only 28 years old now. "Going back to when I was 12 or so, I started working in a local pizza shop, and I really gained a love for food," Dunn said. "As I got older, I got involved with different catering companies and restaurants."

Dunn, a Norwell resident who grew up in Scituate, graduated from Johnson & Wales University in 2005 and has been working in catering ever since.

Dunn had started The Grateful Day catering company after graduating college. But he changed the name of that catering company to Lavishly Dunn in May 2008 to reflect a change in the more-upscale client base he was targeting.

"When I wanted to take it to the next level, I thought incorporating my name into the company name would be a good way to market myself," Dunn said. "We really try to develop a relationship with each client rather than providing a service."

Lavishly Dunn can provide anything from simply dropping off prepared food to serving, providing waitstaff, bartenders, florists and DJs.

"Personalized menu development is a big thing for us," Dunn said. "We want the client to have what they want instead of having a menu and saying 'choose from these things.' ... We work with any budget that there is."

Dunn employs two full-time chefs, a sales executive, and his wife, Kimberly, as the director of marketing. Dunn also employs 50 to 60 part-time waiters and chefs for bigger events.

Lavishly Dunn's main kitchen is in Weymouth, and it also runs the Art Kitchen at the Fuller Craft Museum in Brockton. Dunn created a seasonal menu at the museum that changes every couple of months, with dishes ranging in price from \$4 to \$9. Dunn also caters most events held at the museum, including weddings and business receptions.

Lavishly Dunn uses as much local produce and meat as possible, and creates dishes such as sage-seared scallop wrapped in prosciutto or pan-seared halibut.

Dunn's events range in size up to one cancer research fundraiser that drew 460 people. Although he is involved in every aspect of the business, the biggest reward is right on the dining room floor. "(I love) walking outside at an event and seeing people's faces as they eat my food," Dunn said.

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