

Local event planner finds massive success with DEVOUR Kelowna

Social Magnet Productions event director Holly Dober is the creator of the DEVOUR food festival. Dober has successfully juggled having a family and organizing a smash hit event for the last four years.

By MIKE STRAUS
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Until recently, Kelowna foodies had to drive down to Vancouver or catch a flight to Calgary if they wanted to experience a world-class food festival. But now, thanks to the hard work and dedication of local event planner Holly Dober, the Okanagan is quickly becoming a foodie hotspot.

"DEVOUR is my baby," she says. "It's an event I always wanted to create. I'm kind of a foodie myself, and I love a good night out on the town. DEVOUR combines both of those passions and shines a spotlight on a growing industry in the Okanagan."



Holly Dober

Dober, originally from the Okanagan, worked as an event planner with the Calgary Stampede for nine years before moving back to Kelowna with her husband and newborn in tow.

"I always wanted to produce my own event," she says, "one that I myself would go to. I'm a mom of three, so my social nights out are few and far between. That means I want them to be great ones. That's how DEVOUR came about."

Dober characterizes DEVOUR as an all-inclusive social night filled with great food, great drinks, and great friends.

"The industry has definitely changed," she says. "There's now an appetite – no pun intended – to support local. There's a demand for more restaurants in Kelowna thanks to the influx of young professionals."

In response to this demand, Dober has worked hard to turn DEVOUR into the Okanagan's must-attend event of the year – and she's succeeding. DEVOUR 2015 sold out two weeks before the doors opened, and there's a good chance Dober will need to move the 2016 event outdoors in order to accommodate more guests.

"We're going to have over 50 businesses represented, everything from restaurants to breweries to wineries to craft cider makers to specialty food places. Tree Brewing will be showcasing food for the first time. 19 Okanagan will be promoting their new restaurant, 91."

For Dober, running DEVOUR means having the freedom to pursue things that matter to her. "Being a woman in business means maintaining flexibility, which this line of work allows me to do. I can work morning, noon, or night, and have a mobile office. And as someone with three young children, that's huge."

When she's not planning events, Dober enjoys family sports days and nights out on the town with her husband and friends. She's also involved in organizing the Canadian Cancer Society's Daffodil Ball fundraiser.

DEVOUR 2016 is slated to take place on March 5 at Okanagan College. Tickets are available at DevourKelowna.ca.



Submitted

Holly Dober's 2015 Daffodil Ball, above, and at the DEVOUR Food Festival, below.

