## TORONTO LIFE

**RESTAURANTS** 

## Coming to Casa Loma: a family-friendly steakhouse



The new steakhouse will occupy the Billiard Room and the Oak Room, pictured above. (Image: Steve V. Rose)

When we heard that the **Liberty Entertainment Group**, the company behind **Rosewater** and **Cibo Wine Bar**, was opening a restaurant in **Casa Loma**, we anticipated a fussy, fine-dining institution—the kind of restaurant you'd expect to find housed in an opulent, faux-European castle. It turns out that's not what's happening. The mansion's newest attraction will be a "surprisingly affordable" steakhouse, according to Liberty president and CEO **Nick Di Donato**.

"We are not going to be an expensive restaurant by any means," Di Donato said. "We don't want it to be a finedining restaurant that's only for foodies. We want to open a restaurant that will resonate with local families and the community." In practice, that means summertime barbeques, an oyster bar and a sprawling, 150-seat patio overlooking the city. "The castle is currently viewed as a tourist attraction, not somewhere for Torontonians to visit," Di Donato said. With the restaurant, he hopes to lure locals to the grounds, including neighbourhood families who'll eat there regularly, not just on special occasions.

The as-yet-unnamed steakhouse won't open until ongoing restoration projects are complete. When it does, it'll occupy two oak-paneled rooms (one of which is pictured above) on the western side of the castle's main floor. (The eastern side of the building will continue to operate as a private event space.) **Michael Ewing,** the Liberty Entertainment Group's corporate executive chef, is overseeing the menu, which will include aged-inhouse steaks and organic veggies grown right on the castle grounds.

Like all good castles, this one even has a secret underground room, which Di Donato and crew stumbled on by accident. "While we were renovating, we uncovered the castle's original 1700-bottle wine cellar, which had been boarded off—nobody needed a wine cellar at Casa Loma before." It will be put back to its intended use when the restaurant opens, likely around this time next year.