

Top Chef Biographies

Mattin Noblia

"I wanted to be a chef since the age of five, I was inspired with cooking by my family, my dad with his home cooking skills and my mom's green thumb in the garden, I grew up in a farm with real animals and fresh vegetables. At 14, the youngest possible age, I set out to make my dream a reality by entering a three-year culinary training program, which culminated with an apprenticeship under the noted chef Dominique Jolie (a protégé of 4-Michelin-star chef Joel Robuchon). After completing the apprenticeship and receiving a Chef de cuisine diploma, I enhanced my skills through stints at restaurants in France and Switzerland. In 2002, I came to San Francisco to become a great chef. A year later, at 23 years old, I opened my own tapas restaurant in North Beach called Iluna Basque."

Tim Nugent

A graduate of New England Culinary Institute, Tim has both sweet and savory sides when it comes to cooking. His career began in Monterey, California, where he was executive chef of Fresh Cream Restaurant. He eventually headed to San Francisco and landed at Acquerello, where he continued to work on the savory side. Around the same time, he offered to do pastry as a favor to a friend, and the rest is history. From Zuni Café to Campton Place to Café Rouge (with stints at The Wine Spectator and Liberty Café, as well as the opening of Arlequin Café), his sweet creations have earned consistently high praise. Tim has also appeared on Bay Café, a Bay Area cooking show, and taught local cooking classes. He has a passion for seasonal ingredients grown locally, from which he creates truly memorable desserts. Tim has been at the Sir Francis Drake Hotel for two years, making his mark with some of the greatest sweets around.

Ryan Scott

Ryan Scott, 31, zeroed in on his desire to be a chef at the early age of nine when the "toys" at the top of his Christmas list included kitchen utensils, a wok and food dehydrator. Growing up in Modesto, California, he developed a passion for the culinary arts and, at the same time, shaped his well-honed competitive side as a star player on the Los Banos High School varsity basketball team. Seeking to be the best at any early age, he entered the prestigious California Culinary Academy (CCA) in San Francisco in 1999.

Ryan's professional career began with a one-year internship at the acclaimed Bistro Roxy in Reno, Nevada. In 2001 the enchantment of Hawaii and its array of opportunity compelled him to move out of the landlocked Central Valley to the island of Maui, where he leaped head-first into Polynesian cuisine and took full advantage of his surroundings, eventually staged under two of Hawaii's finest chefs, Peter Merriman and Alan Wong.

A 2001 graduate of the California Culinary Academy, Scott has cooked and learned in the kitchens of many of the country's best chefs. He was a line cook at Restaurant Gary Danko, and staged with Daniel Boulud at Daniel in New York, Charlie Trotter at Trotter's in Chicago, and Suzanne Goin at Luques and A.O.C. in Los Angeles. In late 2005, he joined the Myth restaurant group and launched its successor, Myth Café two months later. Myth Café became an ultimate hot spot for foodies and the lunch crowd in San Francisco and was named one of the top dining destinations for California cuisine by San Francisco Magazine, within the its first three months of opening.

Ryan joined Mission Beach Café in June 2008. During his stint at Mission Beach Café, it was recognized as a top brunch destination by 7x7 Magazine. In addition, his efforts at Mission Beach Café were noticed by USA Today and Zagat

Laurine Wickett

Ever since Laurine Wickett was 15 years old the only work experience she has ever had has been in the kitchen. She attended the Culinary Institute of America right out of high school, moved to the West Coast after graduating, and by age 20, was sous-chef at a San Francisco restaurant, managing a staff of 40. Laurine is constantly fascinated by all things edible. She's continually inspired by her mentors and always looking to learn new things about food. Laurine is the epitome of a hands-on chef. Despite her administrative responsibilities, she prefers to be in the kitchen, working directly with all aspects of food production. She is a meticulous chef who believes that all food is not created equal, and that you should be purposeful about each step. Laurine is currently the chef and owner of Left Coast Catering where one of her most important roles is to be a gracious hostess and make people feel relaxed and comfortable while they enjoy her food. While she is adept at cooking any and all types of cuisines to her client's delight, when she throws her own parties, she prefers to incorporate her Italian roots with whatever new technique, style, or culture she has been exploring.