

JUSTIN PEREZ

CONTACT

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CORE COMPETENCIES/ SKILLS

- Culinary Leadership, Team Building, & Training to Promote from Within
- Menu Development & Kitchen Operations
- Overall Business Operations
- Ability to Manage Multiple Business's and Locations Simultaneously
- Cost Control & Budgeting
- High-Volume Catering & Event Planning
- Customer Experience & Service Excellence
- Inventory & Supply Chain Management
- Food Safety & Regulatory Compliance
- Strategic Planning & Business Growth

AFFILIATIONS

- National Association for Catering and Events (NACE)
- International Special Events Society
- The Special Event
- James Beard Foundation
- Professional Wine Society of Santa Clara Valley
- USDA Meat Federation

CERTIFICATIONS

- ServSafe Food Protection Manager – NRA
- TIPS Alcohol Certification – Health Communications, Inc.

Accomplished Executive Chef/ Business Owner/ Operator with over 30 years of hands-on culinary leadership. Known for building high-impact teams, developing multimillion-dollar brands, and operating at the intersection of innovation and hospitality. Self-taught, endlessly curious, and obsessed with flavor, systems, and service. Thrives in pressure, builds from the ground up, and gets things done. Proven ability to enhance operational efficiency, elevate customer satisfaction, and drive multi-million-dollar revenue growth. Recognized for innovation in menu design, staff development, and strategic leadership. Excels in dynamic, fast-paced environments with a focus on excellence, quality, and creativity.

WORK HISTORY

February 2012 - December 2024

Executive Chef/Business Owner/Operator *Escoffier Culinary Inc.*, Santa Clara, CA

- Built and operated a \$20M catering business and launched multiple successful brands including:
 - Justin's – a five-star seasonal fine dining restaurant**
 - The Homestead – upscale bar & grill**
 - Crafty Beverages – mobile bar service**
 - Daily Fuel Cafes – 10–15 corporate cafes serving 1,400+ guests daily**
 - O-BQ – innovative BBQ brand**
- Engineered seasonal menus across five brands, optimizing cost per plate and increasing guest retention by 22%
- Spearheaded recruitment, training, and performance development for culinary teams
- Led marketing collaborations, community events, and brand promotions
- Maintained consistent compliance with all health, safety, and food sanitation regulations

January 1999 - February 2012

Executive Chef /Business Owner/Operator *AP Development LLC*, Los Gatos, CA

- Managed operations for a \$10M catering business and three successful restaurants:

Buca la Pastia - casual Italian with seasonal menus

Buca - fine dining Italian concept with seasonal menus

Restaurant O - food and wine pairing concept focused on local vineyards

- Transformed costs and improved operations through system optimization and vendor management
- Mentored high-performing teams and led company-wide quality assurance efforts
- Spearheaded sustainability programs and expanded business into new markets

- Certified Professional – Food Safety (CP-FS) – NEHA
- Foodservice Management Professional (FMP) – NRA
- Certified Dietary Manager (CDM, CFPP) – ANFP

LANGUAGES

English

Native or Bilingual

Spanish

Professional Working

January 1989 - December 1999

Previous Roles *Multiple*

Held Owner, Executive and Management Roles with Fresh Choice, Chevy's Mexican Restaurants, Bon Appetit, World Wraps, and Phenom Foods LLC.

Developed Operational Foundations and Learned Large-Scale team leadership in High Volume Kitchens

EDUCATION

May 1995

Bachelor of Arts Culinary/ Business Management
California Culinary Academy, San Francisco

- Dean's List **California Culinary Academy**
- Completed AP courses in Business Management
- **Self-directed learning:** Took initiative and planned all employment opportunities to learn different aspects of culinary management and culinary styles & skills
- **3.95** GPA
- Study Abroad in Spain, Greece, Italy, Caribbean Islands, South Pacific Islands, Hong Kong and China to taste and engage with chefs to learn different food styles and flavors

September 1992

Associate of Arts General Classes/ Business Management
De Anza College, Cupertino, CA