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www.chefs-dishes-restaurants.com



Sam Harrison

Founder, Genuine Restaurants Ltd

You now also have Sam's Larder, Sam's Kitchen, and Sam's Waterside. What is the difference between them, and what makes each one unique?

Riverside – this is our flagship on the river in Hammersmith. Michelin-listed, two AA Rosettes. Where it all starter Larder- our little deli/ shop around the corner. Born out of Lockdown and an opportunity to showcase some of our favourite small food and drinks suppliers

Kitchen – our local cafe. Great coffee, breakfast, brunch. Just drop in Waterside – our second big restaurant, based in Brentford. Its similar to Riverside, but its also different, As Brentford is different than Hammersmith





READ INSIDE

Being a Chef:

Interviw with Chef Craig Chasky

Interview with Chef Natalie Schoonbee-Rozentvaig

Chef, Founder of Schoonbee-Rozentvaig & Wolf





Being Sommelier:

Interview with Lavinia Elena Grigore, Sommelier

Founder of LÈ Wine Experience®

Restaurants:

Interview with Sam Harrison,

Founder of Genuine Restaurants Ltd

Timeless Recipes from

Craig "Burnie" Burns:

Nshinga: A Taste of Life

Along the Congo



Being a line cook:

Interview with

Christopher Pearce

Recipes:

Michael Powell introducing



Pastry World of

Roberto Rinaldini :

BLACK FOREST CAKE

History and stories behind:

From Fast Food to Fine Dining:

The Curious Evolution of the Cuichette

by Julija Toth

News of Culinary industry

by Julija Toth



BEING a CHEF



Chef Craig Chasky
Celebrity Chef | Motivational Speaker | Nutritional Advisor Author
President, "Infused Cuisine" Also known as C4
CelebrityChefChasky@gmail.com | ChefCraigChasky.com

Services: Restaurant Consulting and Design | Culinary Instruction and Classes | Product Development | Marketing, Social Media, Networking | Company Demonstrations

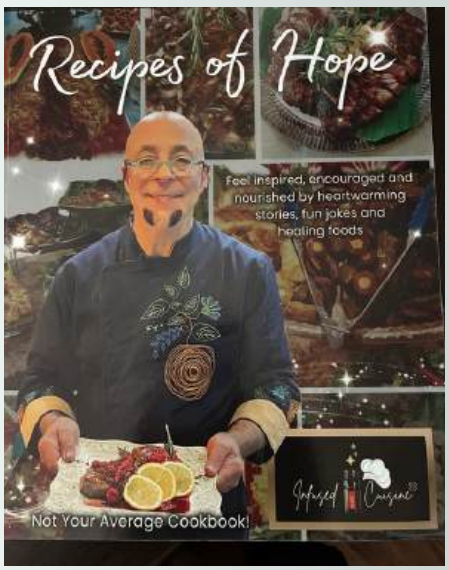


What has changed for you since graduating from the Culinary Institute of America?

Since graduating, I have focused on teaching chefs, beginners, families, and couples how to infuse their cuisine with CPTG pure essential oils. These oils are 50 to 70 times stronger than herbs and enhance food with flavor profiles, aromatics, and health benefits that support sleep, anxiety, inflammation, brain fog, irritability, and energy levels.

What are your thoughts on how the Culinary Institute of America has evolved?

The CIA was quite different when I attended in the 80s, as strong credentials were required for admission. It seems the standards have shifted over time to prioritize tuition over rigorous prerequisites.



When and why did you decide to become a chef?

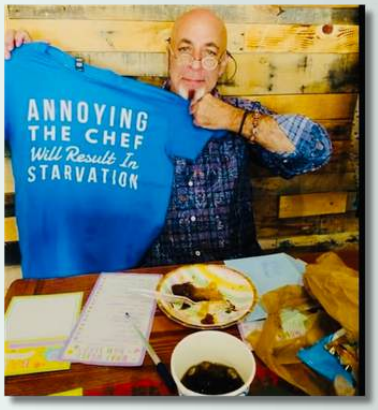
I decided at age six. After burning my hand on the stove as a child, I realized I loved the heat of the kitchen and wanted to pursue culinary arts.

How do you make a kitchen function effectively?

Through mentorship, guidance, and hands-on teaching. I set clear expectations and empower my team to succeed. For example, a former dishwasher in my restaurant eventually became my sous chef and later opened her own successful restaurant

.





How did Infused Cuisine come about?
In the early 80s, I contracted Lyme disease, and the medications destroyed my intestinal flora, leaving me severely malnourished. I met a doctor who introduced me to root-derived rhizome tinctures, which drastically restored my health within six months. Realizing the healing power of pure, organic essential oils—and that standard essential oils are toxic and not for internal use—I founded Infused Cuisine to teach others how to safely cook with CPTG essential oils to fortify their health.

What are your current goals?
I am currently working with my producer to create a cooking show for a major social media platform. My goal is to leave a legacy by teaching healing cuisine and helping people one chef and one family at a time.



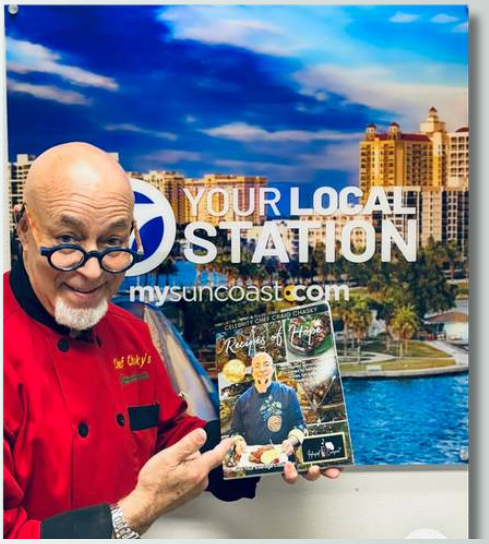
What are your thoughts on current restaurant industry standards?
Given current food costs, surviving in the industry is challenging. I respect establishments that source sustainable, organic, and clean foods. Standards like the Michelin Guide remain a high benchmark, and restaurants that achieve that level are truly exceptional.

What are your favorite ingredients and foods to work with?
My favorite ingredients to cook with are my infused essential oils, which I showcase in my cookbook, Recipes of Hope. My favorite dish to prepare and eat is roast duckling.



Which chefs do you most admire?
I greatly admire Jacques Pépin, Julia Child, Jamie Oliver, and my mentor, Elliot Sharon
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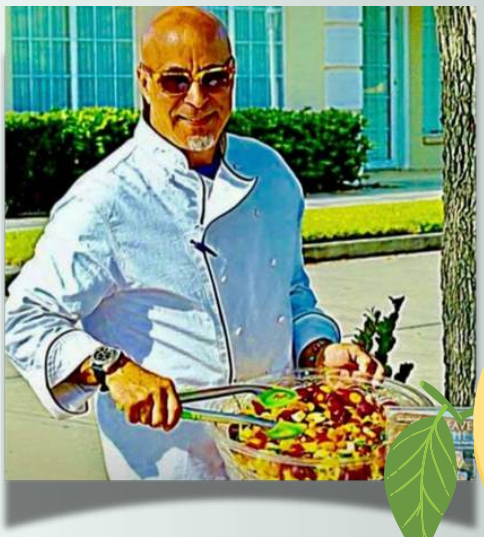




Have you ever experienced burnout, and how did you handle it?
Yes, I experienced severe burnout, closed my restaurant, and took a two-year sabbatical working in retail. A customer remarked that I was like an artist who needed to keep painting, which made me realize my deep passion for the food business. Putting my ego aside and listening to that advice allowed me to return to the culinary world refreshed.

What do you think the future holds for the restaurant industry?
While technology has taken over many operations, service efficiency hasn't necessarily improved. I hope to see a return to personalized service, tableside cooking, and interactive experiences like the Chef's Table. I view culinary work as "food theater"—a blend of entertainment and culinary art.

What is the next major goal in your career?
I want to create a cooking show called Leftover Challenge to teach viewers how to turn leftover ingredients into gourmet meals, helping to reduce household food waste in America.







ChefCraigChasky.com









Chef Natalie Schoonbee-Rozentvaig

Chef, Founder of Schoonbee-Rozentvaig & Wolf

https://www.schoonbee-rozentvaig-wolf.com/

Natalie, first of all, you are a chef. How did you decide to become one? We can see everywhere that being a woman in a professional kitchen isn't always easy. How did your family react to your decision?

I had many interests actually. Initially I wanted to study zoology or marine biology then it became script-writing & fine art but my counsellor at the time said that I'd end up broke all my life if I did any of those. I have always loved food (as in eating it) and I figured that food was a legitimate part of nature & technically a form of art.. so my two passions Nature & Art met perfectly in between when the opportunity to be chef arrived. My family were supportive.

What was your career journey like?

Over the years, I have had a love-hate relationship with my job but at the same time I have always been adaptable, resilient & outrageously ambitious. My career journey has been a dramatic series of waveforms.There's an erratic pulse of excitement & disappointment. See-saws between being inspired & jaded. It fluctuates between precision & monotony. One moment organised & the next unpredictable. Uplifting at times and degrading at others With volatile crests and troughs of passionate dedication and exhausted insanity. I have had a number of incredible mentors and I have worked with brilliant teams. I have enjoyed being able to train and empower student chefs, cooks & scullers with skills and knowledge. I have found this aspect of my job to be incredibly rewarding. I have been very inspired by international cuisine & I have loved all of my travels overseas as they have brought me into the heart of new cultures each with wildly different flavours and styles to their food. This has definitely influenced the approach I take to food. I am often dazzled by Michelin Star chefs & modern molecular gastronomy. I admire the creativity and passion that goes into creating works of art like that! However, I have developed a very rustic and authentic approach to fine dining that leans heavily on "eco-gastronomy." I love fine dining & haute cuisine, but as I mentioned before, I also love nature; I firmly believe that the energy that goes into the preparations of a dish has a significant impact on the physical and psychological benefit a meal will be for the person who eats it.









What was the worst day of your career as a chef? And what was the best?
It's impossible to choose a worst day - there have been hundreds…
It is also impossible to choose a best day - there have been hundreds!
I think that being meticulous and fastidious in the high-pressure, time-sensitive, precision driven environment of a kitchen takes a lot more than skill & talent - It takes immense effort. Most people don't realise this but a chef can have between 400-900 deadlines a day. Chefs have 400-900 bosses a day that they've never even met before. Each order is a deadline. Each guest counts down according to their own clock. Each guest assesses your work according to their own palate. Each guest experiences the textures and temperature according to their own preferences. Out of 400-900 guests, a single guest has the ability & often the inclination to sabotage your entire reputation in a single comment or poor rating. Of the 399-899 other guests who loved their food, perhaps one will actually say as much in a comment or rating. Most managers see the 0/5 rating and crash out. On busy days, lunch service just rolls over into dinner service without a moment's rest in between. On a 14-16 hour shift - after a 10-hour lunch-dinner rush like this, (without having the time to even pee) I've regularly been profoundly crestfallen to walk out of service & into the grumpy face of my manager because one lady's steak was slightly overdone or some guy who asked for no olives in his salad accidentally got olives… It used to leave me defeated and enraged. It took me more than a decade to learn how to "let the dogs bark." I still find myself deflated at times when this happens but I don't let it define my whole day anymore. My career has required tremendous sacrifice; it has taken me away from my family at Christmas time and my wife on Valentine's Day, it has been physically brutal and at times psychologically scarring but it has enabled me to have unwavering tenacity, unbreakable resolve, dignified grace & immense pride in my efforts, my growth, and that of my teammates. I have worked with scullers who are senior CDPs now, Demi chefs who are Sous chefs already & when my team members grow and develop these are some of my favourite days. When I create a recipe that everyone in the kitchen tastes before nodding quietly & making this is soooo yum noises. Those are some of my favorite days. Every few months or so, when a customer sends a compliment to the chef. Those are some of my favourite days.
As I said, Love-Hate





How and why did you decide to start your own project?

I have always wanted to be my own boss & do my own thing, however I don't have close to the capital requirements to open my own restaurant & I have no intention of having "my restaurant" owned and dictated by a group of investors who have never spent a day in a kitchen before. Even if I did.. I'm not a salesperson. I couldn't sell a free skateboard to a 12 year old kid.

What exactly are you doing with your project?

Schoonbee-Rozentvaig & Wolf (Pty) Ltd is a professional consultancy that specialises in the coaching, logistics & design that goes into any food-related business.
With curated culinary consulting, my approach is "Discipline, plated."
I work with restaurants, hotels and hospitality groups, from small family-owned establishments to larger operations, on the systems behind great food.
I create &/or implement SOPs, menu engineering, training, pre-openings, waste & stock control, compliance, procurement and more. Engagements are contracted by invitation, referral & direct outreach according to availability. The name is inspired by my love for my team members & my love for wolves: nobody survives a service alone. That shared stake is what I love about this work. It's also how the next generation learns. Young cooks start on prep, watch the people ahead of them, and are brought in as they're ready. Developing them has been the most rewarding part of my career. That's the wolf in Schoonbee-Rozentvaig & Wolf: discipline, trust, and a team that succeeds together.



How is it going so far? Are you happy with where you are now?

My company is still in its infancy & in that sense, as such, there is still room for new clients. I would welcome to hear from more operators who want &/or need consistency from their kitchens/ food departments & need some direction & inspiration to help bring their vision to life.



What do you believe the future of hospitality and restaurants looks like?

Wow, this is a loaded question, when it comes to upcoming trends.. I genuinely have no idea. I believe that they will become less pretentious and competitive as food becomes less theatrical & more wholesome, as it becomes less debauched & more moderate, less unhealthy and, ideally (depending on what's left of the environment when the shift happens) closer to what the human body was probably designed to consume in the first place. This shift has already started but it's not even touching sides yet.













Significant change will require the scale to tip to the other side. In my eyes, the scale holds a pea in one pan and a metric ton of processed meats, candies and pastries in the other one… Still, a pea is more than we had 30 years ago.

Restaurants and hospitality in general is highly dependent on food, reputation of the food, variety of the food offering, quality of the food etc.

So in the long term I predict we will see substantial changes to these sorts of establishments. However, I do have a theory about the future of hospitality and restaurants anyway. What I can say, is that historically, whenever food and our approach to it has seen significant changes, it has always arisen as a direct result of human travel, behaviour and assumed dominion over nature. Which has basically been dictated by our every whim and will. Since François-Pierre de La Varenne approx. 375 years ago and, perhaps for another 375 years (although I doubt it will be that long) food may well continue to be influenced by human travel, behaviour & sheer audacity. I predict that in the future, food and our approach to it will see changes that are predominantly influenced by the natural environment & that our illusory power & desires will have little relevance in what humans will be able to attain. This isn't to say there's anything wrong with how we approach food right now, at least not from the perspective of a chef. We put our hearts and souls into ennobling our ingredients into the dishes we create in ways that honour and enhance them, like the lithosphere forges diamonds out of dust.

I think this period in the culinary world and in the history of food is the equivalent of the renaissance period in culinary history. Approx. 400 years after the renaissance, Marcel Duchamp signed and displayed a porcelain urinal and called it the "Fountain", his art work has since been displayed in 17 Museums..

In my opinion, the current culinary scene is nearing its zenith, stunning, evolutionary, historic and simply unbelievable - I believe that the Michelangelos & Leonardo da Vincis of the culinary world are alive today and that it's a matter of time before the food we are seeing and eating today becomes the equivalent of a signed urinal.

Do you have a favourite type of food? And is there a particular dish you especially love to cook?

It depends entirely on what I feel like eating. If you ask me when I want lamb curry then my answer will be Cape Malay food and Lamb Kerrie will be my favourite food to make. Then again if you ask me this same question when I want Apple Strudels then my favourite choice will be Austrian and my favourite thing to make will be Apfelstrudel. If you ask me after a busy Saturday night's service, I might say Scottish cuisine because I just want a piece of toast before I crash.

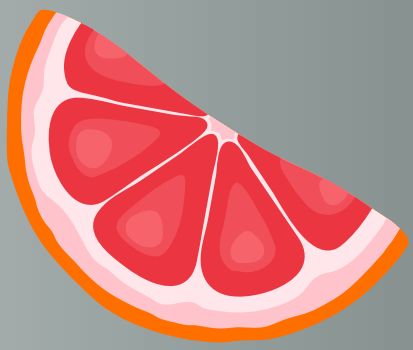




Right now, as I answer your question, my favourite cuisine is both Swiss & Turkish, as I am day-dreaming about one of my favourite fusion dishes - Muesli & Yoghurt.

What are your plans for your professional future?
My own restaurant would be amazing, I would love to have my own one…
I am unsure if that's a realistic goal for me in this life but if I can do it one day, I definitely will. Short of that, I plan to have a successful consultancy and to perhaps do a few more years of work overseas but that will have to wait until our daughters are all out of high school.







https://www.schoonbee-rozentvaig-wolf.com/



BEING SOMMELIER









Lavinia Elena Grigore
Sommelier
Founder of LÈ Wine Experience®

https://lewineexperience.it/

I read that your journey as a sommelier and wine expert began thanks to your grandfather. Let's talk about that. I believe not even one per cent of people are fortunate enough to grow up in, or even visit as children, a place like that. How did it all really begin?

My story with wine began long before I became a sommelier, in the Romania of my childhood, alongside my grandfather. In the 1990s, he tended his vines and made wine both for our family and for sale. To me, it was a fascinating world of seasons, traditions and skills handed down over generations. I remember pruning in winter and spring, protecting the vines from the cold and rodents, and my first harvest when I was about twelve or thirteen. Sometimes I injured my hands with the pruning shears, but I carried on enthusiastically. We pressed the grapes by hand and carried buckets of must to the large fermentation vessels. My grandfather carefully oversaw every stage, tasted the wine and later transferred it into demijohns. I still remember his ingenious homemade system: a rubber tube connected to the demijohn, with its other end submerged in a jug of water. It allowed the carbon dioxide produced during fermentation to escape while preventing air from entering, reducing the risk of oxidation and the wine turning to vinegar. As a little girl, I watched those bubbles rising through the water in fascination, unaware that I was witnessing a small lesson in oenology. Finally came bottling and labelling each vintage. At the time, I could never have imagined that those gestures would become part of my professional identity. Only later, after moving to Italy and pursuing my wine studies, did I understand how precious those lessons had been. Romania gave me my roots, my grandfather passed on his passion, and Italy gave me the opportunity to turn it into a profession. Whenever I tell the story of a wine, in some way I am still sharing what my grandfather taught me.





You subsequently pursued your studies and obtained various certifications. Have they been useful? Today, many people are self-taught, and you already possessed considerable knowledge from a very young age. How did academic training help you, and what role do you think it plays for someone like you?

Practical experience and formal education have always complemented one another in my journey. My grandfather introduced me to the rhythms of the vineyard and the living process behind wine, but studying gave me the technical language to understand what I had experienced. Viticulture, oenology, sensory analysis, wine regions and food pairing all broadened my perspective. Qualifications are valuable, but they are not a finishing line: the world of wine demands lifelong curiosity and continuous learning. Experience taught me to feel wine, education taught me to understand it, and my profession allows me to keep discovering it every day.

Many people believe that being a sommelier is not really a profession for women. Why do you think this perception still exists?

I believe this perception comes from stereotypes that have survived long after the profession itself began to change. For too long, authority in the wine world was associated with men, despite the expertise and contribution of countless women. Today, women are increasingly visible as sommeliers, winemakers, educators and entrepreneurs. Wine has no gender: what matters is knowledge, sensitivity, professionalism and the ability to connect with people. I do not wish to be recognised as a good female sommelier, but simply as a good professional.

Let's now talk about your project, LÈ Wine Experience®. I believe it has no limits, especially considering all the extraordinary and interesting things you are already doing. How do you imagine its future development?



LÈ Wine Experience® grew out of my desire to turn my passion and professional experience into an independent project, one that tells the story of wine through culture, gastronomy and emotion. It is a brand I personally created and registered, with the aim of developing guided tastings, multisensory events, wine consultancy, education and editorial projects. I currently collaborate with three hospitality establishments in Milan: BarMare, Osteria del Laghetto and RisoeLatte Ticinese. I am also a Brand Ambassador for San Grato winery and collaborate with several small independent wine shops in Milan. These partnerships are an important part of my work: they allow me to meet people of different nationalities and cultures, share my knowledge and offer authentic food and wine experiences. For visitors to Milan, they also provide an opportunity to meet me in person and discover what I do. Looking ahead, I would like to expand my collaborations with producers and industry professionals, develop new educational projects and take LÈ Wine Experience® beyond Italy. My aim is not simply to promote wine, but to create connections between people, places and cultures, turning each experience into a memory worth keeping.





Do you produce wine yourself? If not, why not? And if you do, tell us a little more.
I do not currently produce wine myself, although my first experiences of winemaking were alongside my grandfather in Romania. Those memories remain very close to me. Today, my role as a sommelier is to interpret wines, communicate their identity and give a voice to the people and places behind each bottle. I have enormous respect for producers and for the commitment that winemaking requires. I would never rule out exploring that path in the future, but for now my priority is not to put my name on a bottle; it is to tell the stories of those who make it.

What are your favourite wines, and why?
It's hard to choose, but I'm drawn to wines with character and the ability to age: Pauillac, Margaux and Pomerol in Bordeaux, and in Italy Barolo, Barbaresco, Amarone and Valtellina, where vines are grown on terraces with great effort. As a chef, I also think about the table: for me a wine is great when it makes a dish better, and the dish makes the wine better. I still remember one of my first pairings: in 2018, at home, I cooked for the people I love and opened a 2012 Amarone with lasagne, ragù and truffle. I was still experimenting, somewhere between the kitchen and the wine glass, but it just worked. The richness of the wine met the depth of the ragù and the aroma of the truffle. That evening I understood how cooking and wine speak to each other. To me, luxury is not the price of the bottle, but the moment and the people you share it with.



How difficult is it, in reality, to be a sommelier in today's world?
Being a sommelier today is fascinating, but demanding. It involves far more than tasting wine or recommending a pairing: it requires continuous study, sensitivity, communication skills, commercial awareness and a deep understanding of the industry. Consumer expectations and the wine market are constantly evolving, so a sommelier must keep learning, adapting and, above all, listening. As a self-employed professional and entrepreneur, I have also learnt the importance of organisation, determination and resilience. One of our greatest challenges is to make wine approachable without diminishing its complexity. To me, a good sommelier is not someone who demonstrates how much they know, but someone who shares that knowledge and makes everyone feel part of the experience.





Many people say that wine is like poetry: either you understand and love it, or you do not. If I said that to the Greek winemakers I know - I live in Greece - they would probably burst out laughing. They are not particularly fond of poetry, with the exception of Homer, of course! But what is the reality? Does someone need a special talent or a particular personality to truly understand wine or produce great wines? Or is it something that can be learnt?

I believe wine and poetry speak the same language: that of emotion, memory and time. To me, wine is a meeting of history, culture, knowledge, art and humanity. Across the centuries it has accompanied civilisations and brought people and cultures together. Over a glass of wine, alliances have been discussed, reconciliation sought and peace celebrated. Sometimes, around a table, human beings have found words that seemed impossible elsewhere. I do not believe an innate gift is necessary to understand wine. Knowledge is cultivated like a vine: with patience, study, curiosity and experience. Sensory awareness, too, can be trained and refined. Making great wine calls for expertise, intuition and respect for nature, above all the ability to interpret the identity of a place. To understand wine is to look beyond the glass: to hear the history it holds, recognise the hands that made it and feel the humanity running through it. After all, we need not be poets to love poetry, nor sommeliers to be moved by a glass of wine.



Has there ever been a day in your life when you wanted to do something completely different?
If so, what would you have liked to do?
In truth, I have never imagined my life away from hospitality. I was just fifteen when I began working as a kitchen porter in an Italian restaurant in Romania. That was where my love for the industry began and, in a way, my first professional connection with Italy. After several seasonal jobs in Romania, I moved to Italy, where I have gained more than twenty-two years of experience across restaurant service, bars and kitchens. Today, working as both a chef and a sommelier allows me to bring together two inseparable passions: cooking, through which I express creativity, and wine, through which I tell stories of places, cultures and people. Had I chosen a different path, I might have enjoyed managing a restaurant while continuing to nurture my love of hospitality. I have never wanted to change worlds, only to discover new ways of expressing what I love.



How do you think the wine industry will change over the next, say, ten years?

I believe the wine world will undergo significant change over the next decade, shaped by climate change, evolving drinking habits and new generations. Sustainability, the protection of wine-growing regions and technological innovation will become increasingly important. Producers will need to balance tradition with innovation while safeguarding the identity of their wines. I also expect consumers to pay closer attention to quality, authenticity and the stories behind each bottle. Wine will be appreciated not only as a product, but as a cultural experience to discover and share. My hope is that its future will be defined not simply by technology or market trends, but by our ability to preserve the connection between the land, culture and humanity. Wine may evolve, but it should never lose its roots.

Michelin has started evaluating wineries as well. Do you think this is good for wine quality? And do you believe it benefits producers?

I think it can be good, but only on one condition. Visibility helps producers, and a distinction can bring new audiences and international attention. The risk is that the big, well-known names collect all the attention while many small producers, who often make the most authentic wines, stay invisible. If Michelin looks at them too, it will be a real benefit. If it only confirms what is already famous, it will change very little. A wine's value is not in the award, it is in the land and the people behind it.

What are your professional plans for the future?

My aim is to keep developing LÈ Wine Experience®: guided tastings, multisensory events and projects that bring together wine, gastronomy and culture. My biggest dream is a small international wine academy, where qualified sommeliers teach in Italian, English, French and Chinese. I don't have a venue yet, and I prefer to say so honestly. Instead of waiting, I am building it step by step: first with my courses and the partner venues I already work with in Milan, then online, and one day in a space of its own. I am looking for partners who share this vision. I would especially like the academy to be open to students from hospitality schools, because I started in a kitchen at fifteen, and I know how much it helps to meet someone who has already walked that road. I also hope to expand my editorial and educational projects beyond Italy. The greatest value of what we learn lies in being able to pass it on, and perhaps become a small part of someone else's future

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_Wine Experience®

https://lewineexperience.it/





RESTAURANTS





Sam Harrison
Founder, Genuine Restaurants Ltd

https://samsriverside.co.uk/
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Let's start from the beginning. I read that you've been involved in the restaurant and hotel business since you were 16, which is a very young age. What was your role at that time, and how did your passion for restaurants begin?

When I was 16 I started working for a wonderful godmother of mine who had an incredible private catering business. I starting working at these amazing events she did, from Weddings to someone's bash for their 50th. I love it and being part of a team and somehow pulling these amazing events together. It really inspired me to then go and study Hotel & Restaurant Management at University and then I was off and running.

You travelled a lot and worked in different countries. Did all of this experience play a role in your decision to open your first place, Sam's Brasserie?

Big time. Had massive influence on me. My time working in Canada and Australia, showed me a far more relaxed & "hospitable" way of doing hospitality. London restaurants still had a lot of formality and stuffiness around them. I wanted Sam's Brasserie to be the polar opposite



What was your first experience of running your own restaurant like?

Utterly terrifying and so utterly brilliant at the same time. I was so proud to have my name above the door and for it to be my place. But god it was hard work and a very quick reality about owning your own business.....it all comes back to you!







After you opened Harrison's, was it a completely different experience, or had you already developed your own formula for success by that point?
Harrison's was very similar in style and concept. But we adapted Sam's in Chiswick to work for Harrison's in Balham, which is a different part of London and I wanted to reflect that. I also didnt want to role out a chain of restaurants, but rather a small group of independents with their own identity



Now let's talk about Sam's Riverside. You're not a chef, but do you supervise the menus and wine list, or do you leave those areas entirely to your team?
I am not a chef and I'd never pretend to be one. But I love food and I think I know and understand what our guests want. The food and menus is very much partnership. We work on dishes together, combining from a chef's point of view and an owner's. I think it means we end up in a better place. Wine is a huge passion for me and so I still love to pick all of our wines and have been lucky to try wines all across the world when travelling. I always love it when a wine I am listing, has a personal connection



You now also have Sam's Larder, Sam's Kitchen, and Sam's Waterside. What is the difference between them, and what makes each one unique?
Riverside – this is our flagship on the river in Hammersmith. Michelin-listed, two AA Rosettes. Where it all starter
Larder- our little deli/ shop around the corner. Born out of Lockdown and an opportunity to showcase some of our favourite small food and drinks suppliers
Kitchen – our local cafe. Great coffee, breakfast, brunch. Just drop in
Waterside – our second big restaurant, based in Brentford. Its similar to Riverside, but its also different, As Brentford is different than Hammersmith







People in the industry, professional business consultants, Anthony Bourdain, and many others have talked about opening a restaurant as being one of the riskiest businesses you can get into. Would you agree with that?
I 100% agree. Is there any business riskier or with a higher failure rate? But it is also a business with a lot of potential. With a lot of hard work, a great product and a little luck, good places will survive



You're also involved in consultancy, coaching, and training within the industry. What does this work involve, and what do you try to give to professionals in the culinary and hospitality fields?
I think it is really important for us to try and look after each other in this industry. Tough enough already. So I try and help/ coach/ advise anyone who approaches me and help if I can. I also did some lecturing at my old university- Oxford Brookes. I also co wrote an online Restaurant Business course: https://www.udemy.com/course/the-ultimate-food-and-restaurant-business-course/?couponCode=PMNVD2025

Do you love food itself, or do you love restaurants more as a business?
I utterly love food and spend most of my day thinking about it. But what I really love is people and making a business out of looking after people and creating special memories for them





Do you cook? And what is your favourite food?
I have to say that I dont have a lot of spare time and I am lazy chef. Also there are just too many great places to try and to get ideas and inspiration at home. But I do like to shuck a few oysters at home and then cook a simple rib eye steak with a good salad

What do you think about Michelin as an institution for evaluating and recognising restaurants? Do you think the system is fair or accurate? Personally, I've been to some Michelin-starred restaurants where I didn't enjoy the food at all.
I think Michelin has a place and of course there are some incredible Michelin star places. I think for those chef/ owners it is very important. But many of the most popular restaurants all around the world, where people go back daily are not on Michelin. So it is a only a very small part of the restaurant world



What do you think about fine dining? Where do you see its place in the future of the restaurant industry?
I have never been a big fan of Fine Dining, but it will always have a place. Also my time spent working in fine dining when I was younger has always stayed with me in terms of standards and that is hugely important

Has there ever been a point in your career when you wished you were doing something completely different?
Ha! Dont we all have the 2am moment. I have often wondered how I might have an easier or perceived easier life. I sometimes see my friends and think.....what if. This business can take quite a tough toll on family and personal life. That's hard





What do you think the future of restaurants looks like? What changes do you expect to see in the industry?
It's tough times at the moment. Brutal times. So I expect to see more closures. I dont wish that on anyone, but perhaps that leads to fewer, but better places. The use of tech can hopefully help up free time, so that we can focus more on the human contact part. And I hope the industry continues to be seen as a proper career choice and not just a stopgap job

Will you open any new places in the future?
Well never say never.....I do love creating new venues. But heads down for now and lets see what happens in 2027



https://samsriverside.co.uk/

https://www.samswaterside.co.uk/

https://www.samskitchenw6.co.uk/

https://www.samslarder.co.uk



Sam's





TIMELESS RECIPES from Craig "Burnie" Burns



Craig "Burnie" Burns

https://forgottenfeasts.com/

Nshinga: A Taste of Life Along the Congo

The Congo River is more than a waterway. It is a vast, moving world, carrying people, stories and trade through the heart of Central Africa. Imagine a meal shared beside its banks: humble, sustaining and deeply connected to the land. Nshinga evokes that world.

Its flavors are earthy and generous. Millet offers a gentle, grainy warmth; palm oil lends a vivid richness; groundnuts bring a roasted depth; and leafy greens add a fresh, slightly wild note. Together, they suggest a cuisine shaped by what grows nearby and by the knowledge of how to make local foods nourish a community.

The dish is often associated with the Bobangi and placed around 1500 CE. That precise date and attribution are difficult to verify, so Nshinga is best approached as a window into a broader Central African food tradition rather than a documented meal from one exact moment. The Bobangi later became renowned as skilled river traders, navigating the Congo and its tributaries and linking communities along the waterway. Their trading world reminds us that river life was never isolated: people, goods and ideas traveled between settlements and regions.



A bowl like Nshinga invites us to picture the social life behind the food. Meals were more than sustenance. They gathered people together, marked occasions and turned everyday ingredients into something shared. Millet's resilience, the richness of palm oil and the enduring appeal of groundnuts speak to practical ingenuity as much as pleasure.

There is nothing showy about Nshinga, and that is part of its appeal. It carries the flavor of a landscape and the memory of a riverine culture, where food, community and movement met. In each mouthful, one can imagine the Congo not as a distant line on a map, but as a living presence: broad, powerful and always bringing the world a little closer.





BEING a LINE COOK





Christopher Pearce
Line Cook

I was a fortunate child, raised from the tender age of 13 months by my grandparents in a home filled with warmth and support. I couldn't be more grateful; I was adopted. I am incredibly thankful for the upbringing they provided.

Ironically, I wasn't drawn to the culinary world back then. My early experiences in the kitchen were limited to helping my grandma (whom I called Mom) around Christmas or the holidays. She would share her cooking and baking techniques with me, and those moments culminated in a major milestone: helping me win second place in a church bake-off contest.

Today, there is a distinct joy I find in crafting BBQ and authentic Southern comfort food. I am captivated by every facet of the process, from sourcing the perfect ingredients to the meticulous preparation, the cooking itself, and the final presentation on the plate. Above all, it is the love poured into every step of the journey that makes it all so deeply rewarding.

My true passion for cooking ignited much later in life, developing steadily over a span of ten years. Over this decade, I came to a profound realization: this is my calling. The dream truly took root with the conceptualization of a food truck—a vision of culinary independence that I am still passionately pursuing today.

The defining moment of my culinary journey took place at Oaklawn Casino. That is where I met Chef Ken, and that meeting planted the seed for my professional ambition. I immersed myself in learning everything I possibly could under his influence. That environment served as my ultimate testing ground, providing my first true introduction to the demanding and beautiful world of fine dining.

Mastering the art of high-volume cooking was just the beginning of my journey. Today, I am deeply inspired by the culinary world —especially now that chefs are recognized as true artists, visionaries, and even celebrities. This cultural shift...







Gives me hope, injecting a vibrant energy into a profession that truly deserves the spotlight.This sense of fulfillment carries over into my personal life, which has never been stronger. I am engaged to the most beautiful woman in the world, and we are building a wonderful life together: Melissa Blackburn. Looking back, I've had my share of doubts in this line of work. Yet, my ultimate goal as a chef remains clear—to influence and inspire others to cook and help them find the deep sense of peace that the kitchen has always given me.

Most of my peace comes from my family; they are my anchor. And I can't lie about how much they mean to me. Like many, I often find it hard to truly unwind and relax in a fast-paced world. But the environment where I live and rest helps a lot and offers a grounded space to recharge.









PASTRY WORLD of Roberto Rinaldini





BLACK FOREST CAKE
Recipe yields 14 servings

Cocoa Sponge Cake

Ingredients

130 g type 0 wheat flour
30 g unsweetened cocoa powder
30 g potato starch
170 g granulated sugar
240 g whole eggs

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C (356°F). Sift together the flour, potato starch and cocoa powder. In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whip the eggs and sugar until pale, light and voluminous. Gently fold in the sifted dry ingredients using a rubber spatula, taking care not to deflate the mixture and ensuring that no lumps remain. Pour the batter into a lightly buttered 22 cm (8.7 in) round cake pan and bake for 20–25 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely.



Vanilla Chantilly Cream and Sour Cherries

Ingredients

300 g pitted sour cherries
500 g fresh whipping cream
80 g granulated sugar
1 g citrus fibre
2 g vanilla bean

Method

Cut the pitted sour cherries in half. Whip the cream with the sugar, citrus fibre and vanilla until smooth and stable, with a soft yet firm consistency suitable for layering and piping. Keep refrigerated until ready to assemble.







Cherry Soaking Syrup

Ingredients

100 g water
100 g cherry purée
100 g granulated sugar
30 g cherry liqueur

Method

Combine the water, cherry purée and sugar in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat, allow to cool completely, then add the cherry liqueur. Set aside until ready to use.



For Finishing

Ingredients

150 g chocolate shavings

Assembly and Finishing

Slice the cocoa sponge horizontally into three even layers. Place the first sponge layer inside a 22 cm (8.7 in) cake ring and evenly soak it with the cherry syrup. Spread approximately a 1 cm (0.4 in) layer of vanilla Chantilly cream over the sponge and arrange a layer of sour cherries on top. Cover with the second sponge layer and repeat with the cherry syrup, Chantilly cream and sour cherries. Finish with the final layer of sponge and soak evenly with the remaining syrup. Cover the top of the cake with Chantilly cream and finish generously with chocolate shavings and piped swirls of vanilla Chantilly cream. Refrigerate until ready to serve.



https://www.rinaldinipastry.com/





RECIPES





Chef Michael Powell Introducing



Greek style octopus
Garlic hommus,capsicum sauce/lemon segments/mint leaves and greens
With tomato confit

Slow cook 3octopus tentacles for 45 minutes in red wine vinegar
Thyme,juice of one lemon including rind,one lemon for garnish cutting into segments,blend 100g of chickpeas with one clove of garlic olive oil and s+p
Then roast one red capsicum,drizzle of olive oil s+p and drizzle some of the cooking liquor to the ingredients with capsicum in the blender and serve accordingly



Pork belly,apple puree,apple wafer,pickled zucchini and carrots,roasted cauliflower florets
Pommergrante jus

Pan sear the pork belly with a pinch of salt then into the oven at 180c for 30 minutes with a 220g portion of pork Belly cook:
half of a green apple and dice and blend it in food processor with lemon juice until smooth use juices from the pork tray,deglaze with white wine,reduce by half add 2tsp of pomegranate glaze and boil for 4 minutes and cool,place pork on the plate and plate up according or whatever you prefer









HISTORY and STORIES behind

From Fast Food to Fine Dining: The Curious Evolution of the Cuichette

by Julija Toth

Few objects tell the story of modern eating quite like the humble cuichette—the clever French portmanteau blending cuillère (spoon) and fourchette (fork). What began as a practical answer to the demands of efficiency has, over the course of more than a century, evolved into a global design icon. Its journey is one of industrial ingenuity, tactical redesign, and, unexpectedly, culinary prestige: a remarkable bridge between mass utility and fine dining.

The Genesis of a Hybrid

The cuichette was born in the early 20th century, at a time when inventors were increasingly fascinated by utility and convenience. The idea was deceptively simple: why carry two utensils when one could perform both jobs?

The first major breakthrough came in 1908, when Harry L. McCoy patented a "cutting spoon," adding a sharp edge to a traditional spoon bowl. Four years later, in 1912, Frank Emmenegger pushed the concept further, patenting a spoon fitted with tined edges. His invention provided the true structural blueprint for what would eventually become the modern cuichette.

It would take several more decades for the hybrid utensil to acquire its now-familiar linguistic identity. In 1951, Hyde W. Ballard registered the trademark word "Spork" in the United States, cementing the name in American culture.

But the cuichette's great transformation was still to come.

In 1970, the Van Brode Milling Company filed a design patent for a mass-produced plastic version. Lightweight, inexpensive, and disposable, this iteration was perfectly suited to an increasingly mobile world—and it would soon conquer the modern culinary landscape.







A Modern Utilitarian Icon

The cuichette was born from a straightforward economic equation: cost reduction, portability, and ultimate efficiency. By combining the functions of a spoon and fork, it challenged traditional table etiquette and reshaped the way people ate on the go. For commercial operators, the appeal was particularly powerful. One utensil could replace two, potentially cutting manufacturing, shipping, and washing costs in half. That financial logic transformed the cuichette into an institutional staple across three very different worlds. In fast food, global chains such as KFC and Taco Bell adopted plastic cuichettes en masse, helping streamline the demands of high-volume takeout culture. In the world of outdoor adventure and camping, backpackers and survivalists embraced lightweight titanium and aluminum versions. Some even incorporated folding handles, allowing users to shave precious weight from their packs without sacrificing functionality. And in institutional dining, the cuichette proved useful for an entirely different reason. Prisons, schools, and military mess halls favored the hybrid utensil because reducing the number of loose utensils could significantly improve safety and inventory tracking. Across these environments, the cuichette became an almost perfect symbol of practical design: inexpensive, portable, multifunctional, and remarkably difficult to categorize.

From Fast Food to Fine Dining

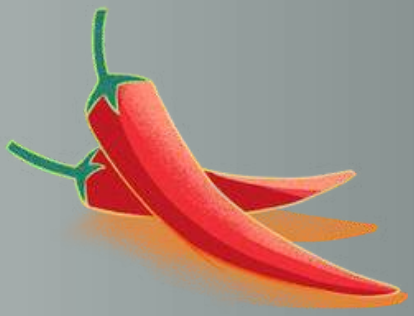
Yet somewhere along the way, the cuichette began to acquire something its early inventors could hardly have anticipated: cultural cachet. In recent decades, the utensil has transcended its utilitarian origins and entered popular culture. One of its most memorable appearances came courtesy of Pixar's Toy Story 4, which introduced Forky, a handmade, existential-crisis-ridden spork fashioned from trash. In French releases, the character was aptly named Fourchette, adding another playful layer to the utensil's linguistic and cultural journey.

But the cuichette's ultimate redemption took place far from the fluorescent-lit world of fast food. In the 2000s, French naturalist and inventor Jean-Louis Orengo reimagined the hybrid utensil for a more sophisticated table. His creation, the "Georgette," transformed the basic concept into an elegant culinary instrument, adding a distinctive curved edge capable of cutting through food. The design was more than a clever novelty. It earned a prestigious gold medal at the Paris Concours Lépine, giving the humble hybrid a seal of inventive distinction. Today, the Georgette can be found not merely in plastic takeout bags but on the tables of Michelin-starred chefs. The cuichette's journey, therefore, has come full circle: from an industrial solution designed to make eating cheaper and easier, to a refined object worthy of the world's most celebrated dining rooms.

Perhaps that is the real lesson of the cuichette. Great design does not necessarily begin with luxury. Sometimes it begins with the simplest question imaginable: Can one thing do the work of two? More than a century later, the answer is still being served—one bite at a time.



NEWS



The Flavor of Change: Inside the Great Culinary Reinvention

by Julija Toth

The culinary and food industries are undergoing a massive, structural transformation. From the grocery store aisle to the local drive-thru, long-standing business models are colliding with new regulatory pressures, shifting consumer habits, and rapid technological breakthroughs. Whether you are a corporate food executive, an independent restaurateur, or a curious diner, the way food is made, marketed, and managed is changing forever.

Here is an in-depth look at the forces rewriting the rules of the food and beverage landscape.

The Policy Pressure Cooker: Regulation and Food Safety

Food manufacturers and retail establishments are facing unprecedented oversight, forcing a massive wave of operational compliance.

- **The $14 Billion Labeling Crisis: New research reveals that proposed ultraprocessed food labeling mandates could impact a staggering 72% of packaged goods. Complying with these mandates is projected to cost the industry roughly $14 billion annually in reformulation and administrative expenses.**
- **The Clean Label Reformulation: In response to heightened consumer scrutiny, major packaged-food makers are acting preemptively. Giants like Kraft Heinz are aggressively reformulating legacy lines—such as Oscar Mayer—to achieve cleaner, simpler ingredient lists.**
- **The New FDA Mandate: The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has officially shaken up retail operations with its updated food safety guidelines. The most disruptive change requires all retail food establishments to develop and maintain a formal, written Food Safety Management System within the next four years. Additionally, the new code introduces much stricter definitions separating heavy disinfection from standard sanitization.**
- **Outbreak Fallout: These regulatory shifts arrive at a tense moment for the industry, as supply chains and restaurant traffic grapple with the operational fallout of a major Cyclospora outbreak. The crisis has disrupted national restaurant brands and triggered emergency safety audits nationwide.**







The Restaurant Landscape: Bankruptcies, Traffic Slumps, and Menu Shrink

The hospitality sector is navigating a perfect storm of soaring real estate costs, rising labor wages, and a increasingly cost-conscious public.

• Franchisee Distress: The financial squeeze on operators has reached a boiling point. High-profile bankruptcies among major franchisees, including notable Wendy's operators, have exposed severe liquidity pressures across the fast-food landscape.

• Plunging Fast-Food Traffic: U.S. Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) traffic dropped by 2.6% year-over-year. While brands attempted to offset the loss by implementing a parallel 2.6% price increase, the strategy resulted in a net-sales stagnation of just 0.6%. Consumers are officially pushing back against fast-food inflation by choosing to eat at home.

• The "Comfort Comeback" Menu Shrink: To combat labor shortages and minimize ingredient waste, restaurants are slashing their core menu counts by 15% to 20%. Instead of complex, experimental dishes, menus are leaning into high-margin, predictable "comfort and value" items. This shift has made crispy and breaded chicken the absolute dominant fixture of the modern menu.

The "Barbell Economy" and Evolving Consumer Shifts

Consumer behavior is splitting down the middle, driven by economic anxiety on one side and wellness innovations on the other.

• The Barbell Approach to Spending: Shoppers are increasingly adopting a two-sided strategy: they ruthlessly budget on everyday staples, only to splurge occasionally on premium food and beverage experiences. The financial strain is real—about 40% of surveyed workers report waiting until payday just to buy essential groceries.

• The GLP-1 Wellness Wave: The explosive adoption of weight-loss medications is actively reshaping purchasing data. While overall food spending among GLP-1 users has dropped, their restaurant spending on high-protein menu items has spiked by 56%, and high-fiber items by 42%. Casual dining spots are moving fast to engineer dedicated wellness add-ons.

• Future Flavor Themes: Looking ahead, industry drivers are focusing on sensory level-ups, nostalgia remixed with modern twists, portion-controlled indulgence ("portion me"), and high-protein formulations ("gimme my protein"). Meanwhile, persistent inflation driven by energy, fertilizer, and weather disruptions means CPG leaders like Campbell's, Conagra, and McCormick anticipate ongoing price adjustments.

• The Anti-Brand Bakery: In urban markets, a fascinating cultural counter-movement has emerged. Weary of corporate chains, consumers are flocking to "anti-brand" bakeries. These minimalist, unbranded micro-boutiques reject traditional marketing entirely, relying instead on word-of-mouth and extreme product scarcity to build cult-like followings.



Corporate Shakeups and the Tech Revolution

To survive, the corporate food sector is restructuring its assets and handing the keys to artificial intelligence.

• Layoffs and Asset Divestment: Food and beverage manufacturing layoffs have risen significantly. Industry giants are leaning out their portfolios, as seen with Nestlé's plant adjustments and B&G Foods' strategic sale of its legacy B&M and Joan of Arc brands.

• Restaurant M&A: Despite the tough climate, mergers and acquisitions remain highly active. In a notable corporate move, Gen Restaurant Group sold 47 of its locations to Chubby Cattle in a $100 million deal.

• AI on the Factory Floor: Manufacturers are moving AI out of the pilot phase and into daily infrastructure. Advanced AI vision systems are now being deployed directly onto factory floors to automate complex meat-cutting and delicate vegetable slicing—precision tasks previously considered completely off-limits to machines.

• Predictive Flavor Velocity: Brands are turning to predictive AI to scan social media sentiment and virtually test flavor formulations before they ever hit production.

Highlighting this extreme product velocity is Java Factory's Flavor52 experiment, which leverages data pipelines to launch an unprecedented 52 unique coffee flavors in 52 weeks.

The culinary industry is no longer just about feeding people; it is an active race to adapt to a high-tech, highly regulated, and economically divided world. The brands that survive will be those that can balance automation with authenticity, and value with premium appeal.









CONTACT US:

info@chefs-dishes-restaurants.com



