

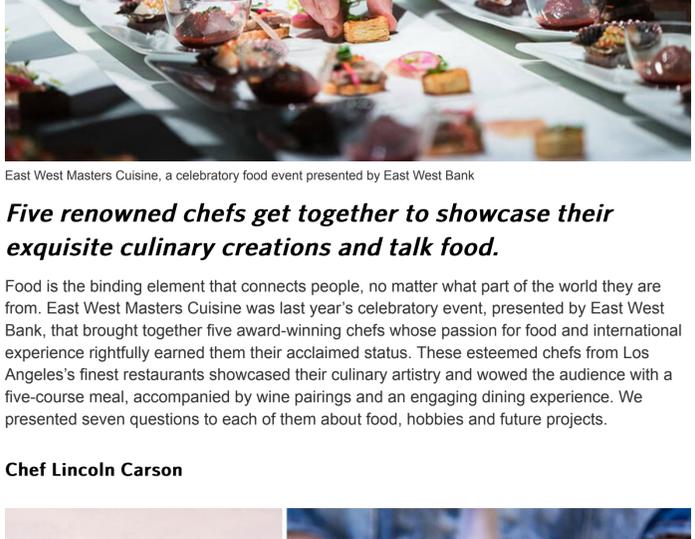
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EAST WEST LIFESTYLE

East West Masters Cuisine: In Conversation with Acclaimed Chefs

By Yulia Idemenko Jan. 23, 2020



East West Masters Cuisine, a celebratory food event presented by East West Bank

Five renowned chefs get together to showcase their exquisite culinary creations and talk food.

Food is the binding element that connects people, no matter what part of the world they are from. East West Masters Cuisine was last year's celebratory event, presented by East West Bank, that brought together five award-winning chefs whose passion for food and international experience rightfully earned them their acclaimed status. These esteemed chefs from Los Angeles's finest restaurants showcased their culinary artistry and wowed the audience with a five-course meal, accompanied by wine pairings and an engaging dining experience. We presented seven questions to each of them about food, hobbies and future projects.

Chef Lincoln Carson



Chef Lincoln Carson



Lincoln Carson is the chef and owner of [Bon Temps](#), an all-day restaurant in the Arts District of Downtown LA. Modeled after a French brasserie, Bon Temps offers modern French dishes with a California twist. Carson's career spans nearly three decades and encompasses a tenure at The Mina Group, where he was responsible for all aspects of pastry, dessert and bread programs; a guest educator position at Valrhona Chocolate; and stints at internationally acclaimed restaurants such as Le Bernardin and La Côte Basque.

What is your favorite food, snack or guilty pleasure?

Buffalo wings with blue cheese dressing.

What dish are you most proud of?

The last dish that I have put on the menu.

What is the most popular dish at your restaurant?

Our Crab Cake is neck and neck with our Uni Caviar Tartlette.

What is your next culinary challenge?

I feel that every day in the restaurant is a challenge, in that we are constantly trying to grow and improve what we are already doing.

What are your hobbies outside of cooking?

Motorcycles, sporting clays, traveling, camping, eating...

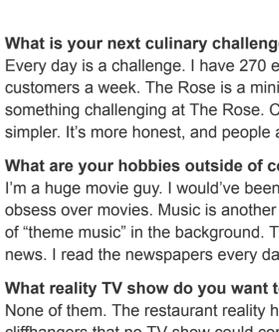
What three celebrities do you want to cook for (or have you already cooked for)?

Barack Obama (again), Valentino Rossi, David Letterman.

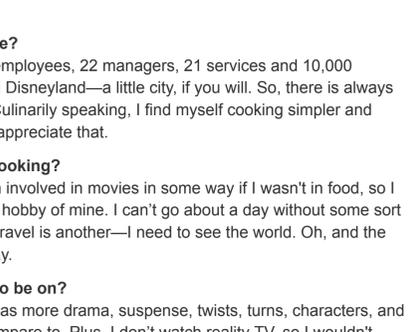
What reality TV show do you want to be on?

"Man vs. Wild" with Bear Grylls.

Chef Jason Neroni



Chef Jason Neroni



Jason Neroni is the chef/partner of [The Rose Venice](#), an iconic restaurant in the heart of LA's seaside town. Having served the local community for nearly 40 years, the revamped restaurant features local Southern California cuisine that's influenced by Neroni's world travels and his culinary experience abroad. Neroni started out his career by working in Disneyland's Club 33, before setting out to New York and then Europe. His growing reputation earned him an invitation from Spain to serve as a culinary ambassador, where he worked alongside some of Spain's most influential chefs.

What is your favorite food, snack or guilty pleasure?

I love Chinese food, dumplings and noodles in broth. I'm a sucker for dim sum.

What dish are you most proud of?

There have been so many! It's hard to pin down a favorite dish in 25 years of cooking. I'm proud that I can continue to innovate, evolve and create new dishes. I honor the past of previous dishes that have been created and bring back dishes for customers because I believe some hits need to be played again. But there is no single dish that stands out. That's like picking a favorite child.

What is the most popular dish at your restaurant?

That depends on the time of day. The Rose Breakfast Burrito and the Gold's Standard (egg whites, sweet potatoes, mushrooms, turkey sausage) battle it out for brunch supremacy. We sell a lot of grain bowls for lunch—it's Venice Beach. For dinner, it would be Crispy Brussels Sprouts with dashi broth and the Smoked Radiatore Carbonara. Those two dishes are unstoppable. I believe we have sold almost 100,000 carbonara in four years.



Chefs and Bennett Pozil, executive vice president and head of corporate banking at East West Bank

What is your next culinary challenge?

Every day is a challenge. I have 270 employees, 22 managers, 21 services and 10,000 customers a week. The Rose is a mini Disneyland—a little city, if you will. So, there is always something challenging at The Rose. Culinaryland, I find myself simpler and simpler. It's more honest, and people appreciate that.

What are your hobbies outside of cooking?

I'm a huge movie guy. I would've been involved in movies in some way if I wasn't in food, so I obsess over movies. Music is another hobby of mine. I can't go about a day without some sort of "theme music" in the background. Travel is another—I need to see the world. Oh, and the news. I read the newspapers every day.

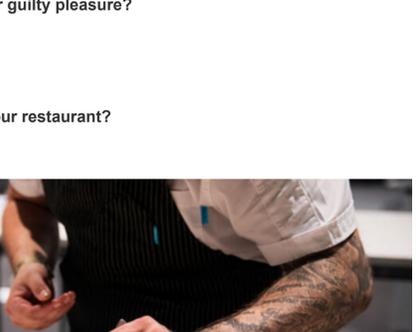
What reality TV show do you want to be on?

None of them. The restaurant reality has more drama, suspense, twists, turns, characters, and cliffhangers that no TV show could compare to. Plus, I don't watch reality TV, so I wouldn't know.

Chef Ray Garcia



Chef Ray Garcia



Ray Garcia is the chef at [Broken Spanish](#), a modern Mexican restaurant in Downtown LA. Drawing from the city's rich culture and Garcia's own upbringing in Los Angeles, the restaurant combines long-established traditions with a modern twist. Broken Spanish has earned countless accolades and recognition; Garcia was named by Esquire magazine as their Chef of the Year in 2015 and has received praise from the late restaurant critic Jonathan Gold himself.

What is your favorite food, snack or guilty pleasure?

Beer, whiskey, chicken wings.

What dish are you most proud of?

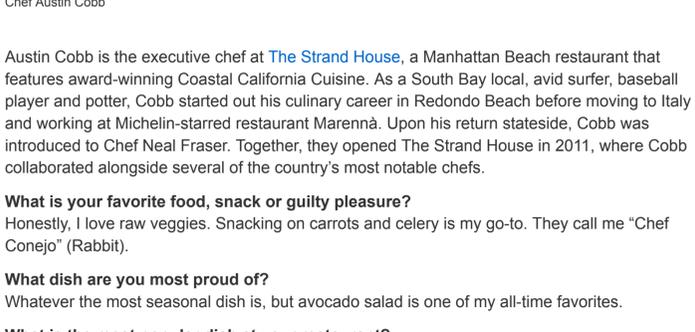
Chicharron.

What is the most popular dish at your restaurant?

Lamb neck tamales, fresh-pressed tortillas, lentils.

What is your next culinary challenge?

Opening another restaurant soon.



Duck leg confit prepared by one of the chefs at the East West Masters Cuisine

What are your hobbies outside of cooking?

Hiking, traveling and swimming.

What three celebrities do you want to cook for (or have you already cooked for)?

I have cooked for [the late] Anthony Bourdain and Maya Angelou, and Bernie Sanders.

What reality TV show do you want to be on?

"Million Dollar Listing" or "Below Deck."

Chef Neal Fraser

Chef Neal Fraser

Neal Fraser is the chef and owner of multiple restaurant concepts, including critically acclaimed restaurant [Redbird](#); the high-volume special events and performing arts venue Vibiana; and the fast-casual Fritzi Coop, located inside the Farmers Market at The Grove. Located in a historic former cathedral that is one of downtown LA's most notable architectural features, Redbird features modern American cuisine and highlights the multi-culturalism of the city. The restaurant proudly holds its spot on late food critic Jonathan Gold's 101 Best Restaurants List for the Los Angeles Times.

What is your favorite food, snack or guilty pleasure?

Potato chips.

What dish are you most proud of?

Thai-style crab soup.

What is the most popular dish at your restaurant?

Chicken pot pie.

Dessert dish prepared by one of the chefs at the East West Masters Cuisine

What is your next culinary challenge?

Restaurant cooking school and an inn in Ojai.

What are your hobbies outside of cooking?

Bicycle riding and traveling.

What three celebrities do you want to cook for?

Gary Oldman, Willem Dafoe and Barack Obama.

What reality TV show do you want to be on?

None.

Chef Austin Cobb

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Austin Cobb is the executive chef at [The Strand House](#), a Manhattan Beach restaurant that features award-winning Coastal California Cuisine. As a South Bay local, avid surfer, baseball player and potter, Cobb started out his culinary career in Redondo Beach before moving to Italy and working at Michelin-starred restaurant Marennà. Upon his return stateside, Cobb was introduced to Chef Neal Fraser. Together, they opened The Strand House in 2011, where Cobb collaborated alongside several of the country's most notable chefs.

What is your favorite food, snack or guilty pleasure?

Honestly, I love raw veggies. Snacking on carrots and celery is my go-to. They call me "Chef Conejo" (Rabbit).

What dish are you most proud of?

Whatever the most seasonal dish is, but avocado salad is one of my all-time favorites.

What is the most popular dish at your restaurant?

Hamachi crudo.

What is your next culinary challenge?

Coming up with unique, never-before-done fall dishes.

What are your hobbies outside of cooking?

Surfing, pottery, traveling, baseball, music—playing records, dancing and singing!

What three celebrities do you want to cook for (or have you already cooked for)?

I've cooked for Will Smith (I used to be his personal chef) and Ned Colletti. I would love to cook for Grant "Twiggy" Baker, an Australian big-wave surfer.

What reality TV show do you want to be on?

"The Bachelor"—just kidding! I already did "Beat Bobby Flay," and that's probably it for me for now.