

DAVID SLAY

It should be no surprise given his pedigree that David Slay is the recipient of numerous culinary accolades. A third generation American restaurateur steeped in culinary culture and hospitable traditions of the Midwest. David's father Anthony was a chef and restaurateur. David started his training at the age of 11 in his father's kitchen. Later at the age of 17 David moved to Las Vegas and apprenticed with classically trained European chefs during the glory days of Las Vegas. At 20 David opened his first restaurant, a 26 seat French café with no liquor license, due to the fact he was not old enough to get one.

Early in his career (1980) he met a farmer, Bill Rauch from Rauch Farms located on the outskirts of the city who influenced his desire to cook seasonal as well as natural. Farmer Bill pulled onto his parking lot to see if he would be interested in some chemical free zucchini, tomatoes and corn. David was intrigued by the idea but not sure until he would taste the first crop of the summer. "An 8 pound zucchini" farmer Bill proclaimed. Farmer Bill and David worked from that year on to build a relationship and educate each other about "clean" food. Bill would soon grow baby zucchini and petit pan, "why in the world would anybody eat such a small vegetable" and the squash blossoms he usually fed to the goats.

By now the passion for cooking had evoked a fire inside and David went to France and apprenticed with two star chef Gerard Vie at Tros Marches in Versailles and A. Beauvillier Restaurant in Paris with famed chef Marc Angel.

David was the owner and chef of several popular fine dining restaurants in his hometown of St. Louis, Missouri, before tackling the competitive California restaurant scene. The move proved to be a successful one as Slay—who is probably best known today as the face and spirit of David Slay's La Veranda in Beverly Hills, the renowned California/European-style bistro he founded in 1989. Under Slay's direction, La Veranda was recognized as one of the "Best Gold Medal Restaurants in the United States" and Los Angeles magazine went so far as to include David Slay on a list of "300 Reasons Not To Pack Up and Leave L.A." as well as being named by Food and Wine Magazine's list of top new chefs and consistent marks from The Zagat Guide.

It wasn't long before the critical acclaim for La Veranda reached the eyes and ears of Hollywood luminaries and Slay built a name for himself as a "boutique" caterer hosting parties for the arts and entertainment industry. He takes an innovative and customized approach to designing menus for his private customers, attending to special dietary needs—and unusual requests—and personally overseeing every aspect of an event, whether a movie opening or a holiday reception, to ensure that it is superb.

Today David enjoys a well-earned reputation as one of the most creative and professional chefs in the world of food and entertaining. Slay brings this same attentiveness to detail and focus on personable service to his work at Park Ave. Restaurant in Orange County, California. He is as likely to be found watching over the staff of sous chefs, bakers and pastry chefs as he is to be spotted visiting customers at their tables to explain how he prepared the meal they are about to have.

Slay's creative renditions of traditional American cuisine and his efforts to maintain an all natural and preservative free menu has always been a way of cooking from the beginning of his career. Slay's depth of experience, finely honed skills and passion for entertaining are key ingredients in David's continued success.

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