

THE WINE + FOOD ISSUE!

SERENDIPITY

LIVING IN FAIRFIELD & WESTCHESTER

MOST INNOVATIVE CHEFS OF 2016!

Mogan Anthony, Carl Carrion, Albert DeAngelis,
Eric Haugen, Constantine Kalandranis,
Michael Kaphan, Geoff Lazlo, Brian Lewis,
Gregori Peña, Tony Pham and
Robin Selden

MASTER CHEFS

These are *Serendipity's* Most Innovative Chefs of 2016, chosen for their buzzed about restaurants, revolutionary dishes and commitment to pushing the flavor envelope. They are clear examples that the culinary landscape in this area is world-class.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CONOR DOHERTY

Mogan Anthony

Carl Carrion

Albert DeAngelis

Eric Haugen

Constantine
Kalandranis

Michael Kaphan

Geoff Lazlo

Brian Lewis

Gregori Peña

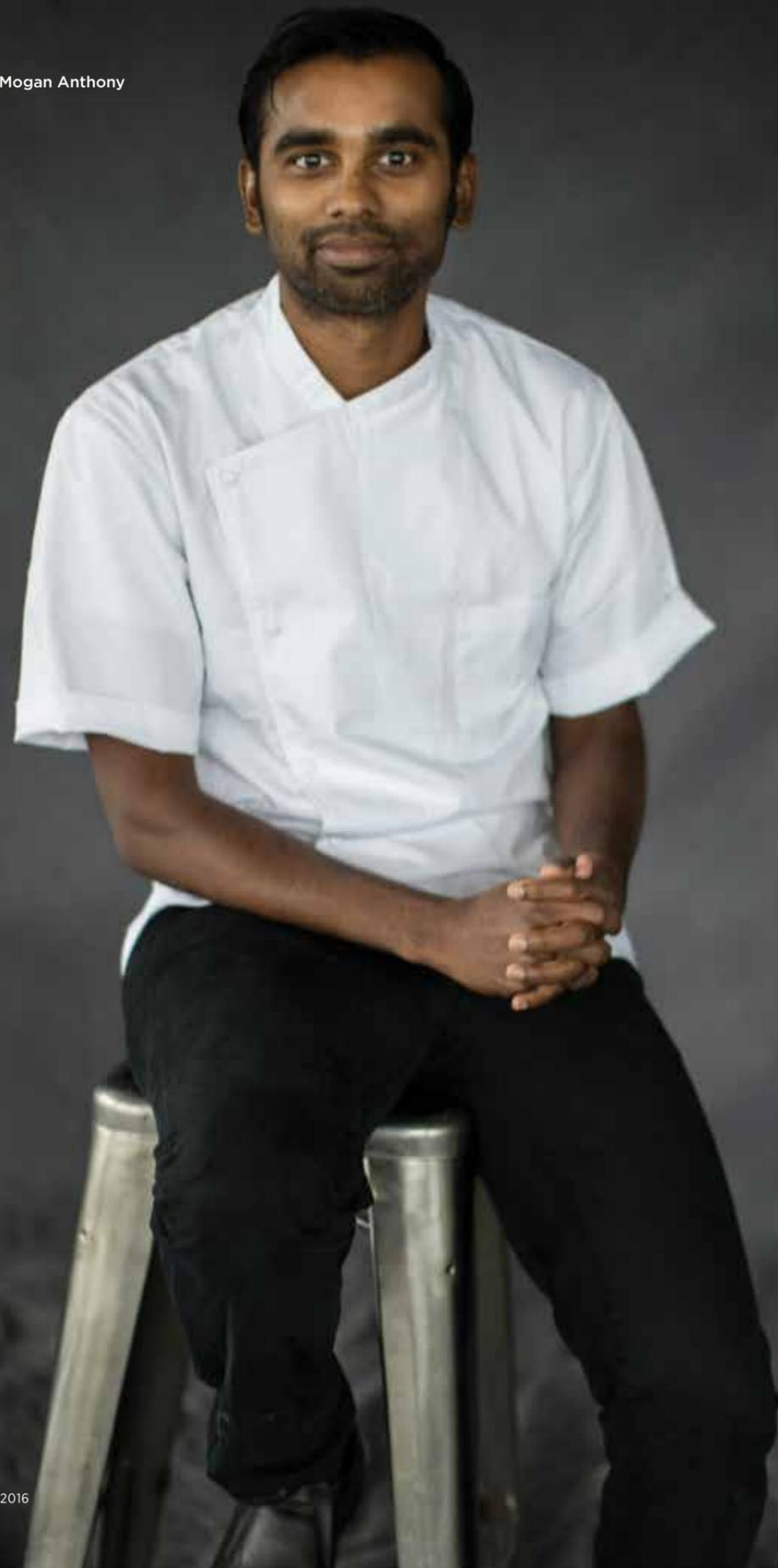
Tony Pham

Robin Selden

Tony Pham and
Brian Lewis



Mogan Anthony



Carl Carrion and Albert DeAngelis



CHEF

Mogan Anthony

VILLAGE SOCIAL
Mount Kisco, NY, villagesocialkb.com

How you define innovation in the kitchen: Innovation means evolving with flavors, ingredients and techniques—it doesn't necessarily have to be a breakthrough discovery.

First memorable dish you made: My former chef Jean Georges [Vongerichten] used to crust tuna with Japanese rice crackers and it was my project my entire time [at Perry Street, the] Michelin star establishment in the West Village in NYC. When I did my own menu, I crusted my tuna with salty pretzels and served it with kimchi spiked aioli. It [was one of the] most popular dishes on our menu.

Best cooking advice you ever got: From Jean Georges: "Nothing new comes from the sea and the farm, so be creative and playful."

Favorite update you put on a classic dish:

I love putting a fresh spin on classics such as baked potato carbonara that we created at Village as a special. Potato noodles are quickly blanched and cooked in bacon and Parmesan and finished with a touch of egg yolk, sour cream and chives.

What's next for you:

We have a bunch of projects lined up such as a cookbook offer, James Beard House [event], a new Village Social at a Rye location, and [right now we are] putting together a serious Swat team to execute all these projects.

CHEF

Carl Carrion

CASK REPUBLIC
Stamford, South Norwalk and New Haven, CT, caskrepublic.com

How you define innovation in the kitchen: I believe that innovation in the kitchen is staying ahead of the times; finding the best

way possible to be creative with the current trends, but adding my own twist that most may believe to be new and exciting. This mind-set includes staying within [the] season when it comes to ingredients, always challenging myself to try new techniques, as well as creating my own techniques.

Innovation is something I make sure my staff understands and I enjoy helping them learn how to stay innovative.

First memorable dish you made: It's hard for me to pinpoint my first memorable dish, since I have been working in a kitchen for over 20 years. I feel that every time I have created a dish that I am proud of, I end up trumping that dish with another. However, I do believe that many of the dishes I have created for our beer dinners have been quite memorable.

Best cooking advice you ever got: When I was in culinary school, my instructor, Chef Neil Becker, gave me the best advice: "Taste everything. Taste the start, taste the end. Even if you don't like it, taste everything!"

“When I was in culinary school, my instructor, Chef Neil Becker, gave me the best advice: ‘Taste everything. Taste the start, taste the end. Even if you don’t like it, taste everything!’” —CARL CARRION

Favorite new spin you put on a classic dish:

I love making gazpacho. My spin on the dish is to grill all the ingredients first, then puree and serve cold.

Food trend you’re into (or over!): I am definitely over the trend of cooking with chemicals, such as chemical gastronomy.

What’s next for you:

Christian Burns, Owner of Skal Restaurant Group, (the umbrella company of Cask Republic and the Ginger Man) and I are working on a completely new and exciting concept that will debut in South Norwalk this coming spring of 2017. This summer we will be working on testing new recipes and look forward to sharing all the details with you really soon. We’re excited about this new concept—think outdoors, water views and lots of fun.

CHEF

Albert DeAngelis

EASTEND
Greenwich, CT, zhospitalitygroup.com

How you define innovation in the kitchen:

New ideas—either new recipes, new presentations, or combinations. New ways of executing service to constantly improve the experience of our guests.

First memorable dish you made: Mussels with red curry cream, fava, cilantro and wild striped bass with black mission figs.

Best cooking advice you ever got: “It’s all about finesse.”—Thomas Keller, from his cookbook

Favorite innovative dish locally: Luigi Bianco pizza at Fortina in Armonk, NY

Favorite new spin you put on a classic dish: Pasta carbonara: Incorporate cauliflower or corn puree, top with a soft poached egg and don’t forget the bacon!

Food trend you’re into (and over!): I’m over

so much kale, although I still like dinosaur kale and lollipop kale sprouts. I’m into coming up with more substantial gluten-free, vegan and vegetarian menu items.

What’s next for you: The new White Plains and Danbury openings of Mediterraneo. [And] more grey hair!

CHEF

Eric Haugen

THE NATIONAL
Greenwich, CT, thenational-ct.com

How you define innovation in the kitchen:

Taking a risk and having customers respond positively—it means you’ve connected your creative idea to your guest. That’s always the goal and not always easy to achieve.

First memorable dish you made: Poularde en Vessie (chicken cooked in pigs bladder)

Favorite innovative dish locally: I’m always satisfied by the surprises at Bar Taco, and how Americana the approach is to food that is very Baja-coastal.

It’s also just an easy restaurant to feel comfortable at.

Favorite new spin you put on a classic dish:

I’m loving the take on Mexican street corn at The National Greenwich. It’s served on the cobb and grilled over wood, seasoned with green curry and lime.

Food trend you’re into (and over!): Into: How farm-to-table has become the standard bearer at most casual restaurants. There’s never been a better time to be a diner. Over: Pork belly

What’s next for you:

Our [restaurant] group continues to grow. We will continue to develop fresh and dynamic concepts, and hopefully all will be as well received as The National in Greenwich!

CHEF

Constantine Kalandranis

273 KITCHEN
Harrison, NY, 273kitchen.com

Highlight of your career: Definitely opening our first restaurant in Nyack with my closest family and friends. Cooking in Greece was also really cool!

First memorable dish you made: Family meal for the staff at Gotham Bar & Grill: souvlaki with the best green market cucumber tzatziki and Berkshire pork—we really pigged out on this one! It really showed me that I am strong at cooking.

Best cooking advice you ever got:

“Work is work, your responsibility is to take care of your family whether it is cooking or anything else...never fall in love with your own art...work is work.” —Matthew Kalandranis, my father

Favorite innovative dish locally:

Any dish you eat at Mill Street Bar & Table is innovative and spot on...best restaurant around in my opinion. From baked clams to hummus crudité to all the crudo it truly is the real deal spot.

Favorite new spin you put on a classic dish:

Love doing the raw and marinated fish with the typical greek dips like tzatziki, hummus, and skordalia, but using more exciting presentations as raw first courses.

Food trend you’re into (and over!):

Definitely into the taco scene and it sucks because Greek/Mediterranean food tastes better in tortillas sometimes. I’m not so into overdoing the chemical cooking lately.

What’s next for you:

We are looking to expand and diversify slightly and to really go into the casual sector with a cool concept. Stay tuned...

CHEF

Michael Kaphan

PURDY’S FARMER & THE FISH
North Salem, NY, farmerandthefish.com

How you define innovation in the kitchen:

Being able to represent different flavor attributes of the same vegetable through different preparation techniques.

Highlight of your career so far: Building the Farm at Farmer & the Fish.

First memorable dish you made: My first Passover dinner in college—I cooked for 10 guys. It was my first time at age 19 cooking for friends.

Geoff Lazlo





Best cooking advice you ever got: Taste it before you serve it...I have gotten this advice from many.

Favorite innovative dish locally: Chef Dave DiBari's pig head doughnut.

Favorite new spin you put on a classic dish: Growing up in Staten Island, a McDonald's breakfast sandwich became the norm since my junior High School was near one and the bus stop was at the McDonald's. Our spin on the American fast food classic is the farmer's breakfast encompassing house smoked Canadian bacon, eggs on a buttery house-baked cheddar biscuit, served with sausage gravy.

Food trend you're into (and over!): Into: The resurgence of the pig. Over: Overpriced hamburgers.

What's next for you: Opening up a restaurant in Sleepy Hollow, NY, and New York City (Gramercy).

CHEF

Geoff Lazlo

MILL STREET BAR & TABLE
Greenwich, CT, millstct.com

How you define innovation in the kitchen: Innovation is allowing everyone on the team to be creative.

Highlight of your career so far: Opening my own restaurant

First memorable dish you made: Smoked Arctic char, peas, speck, buttermilk and purslane

Best cooking advice you ever got: Taste all your food before you plate it.

Favorite innovative dish locally: Tofu pockets, crab and pumpernickel at Kawa Ni

Favorite new spin you put on a classic dish: Carrot and kale falafel with preserved lemon yogurt and watercress

Food trend you're into: We don't follow trends.

CHEF

Brian Lewis

THE COTTAGE
Westport, CT, thecottagewestport.com

How you define innovation in the kitchen: Innovation in our kitchen relies greatly upon establishing our team and defining our own "culture" within the kitchen before we can even dare to think of innovation. A strong discipline and coordination together is essential. As a team we all navigate through our days with a 'chasing excellence' mentality, which keeps us constantly searching for new ideas, flavor profiles,

techniques and ways to express ourselves through food. I strongly believe in never resting on any good or even great idea, but constantly building upon them toward something even better, and perhaps even great and unique.

Highlight of your career so far:

A few years ago I was honored to be a guest chef for a fundraising dinner at the historic Glass House in New Canaan with legendary Chef Michel Richard. I have followed his work over the dozen years that I spent working in California and he has been an incredible influence on my career. Michel was as kind and funny as he was talented and we prepared a beautiful alternating tasting menu of each other's dishes for about 10 courses.

First memorable dish you made:

Armagnac soufflé with drunken prunes for Chef Andre Soltner

Best cooking advice you ever got:

"It's just food, it's really all just about food, so put your head down and cook really well for the next 10 years and the rest will follow."

—Chef Tom Elia after my graduation from C.I.A. (my chef and mentor growing up in northern Westchester at Mona Trattoria)

Favorite innovative dish locally:

Chef Mogan Anthony's brussels sprouts with mortadella and pistachio—insanely delicious with loads of umami and a really perfect dish!

Favorite new spin you put on a classic dish: Duck fried rice with maitake mushrooms, duck confit and sunny quail eggs

Food trend you're into (and over!): I try and avoid "trends" and just put my head down and cook my heart out....sometimes us chefs are contributing to the "trendsetting" unknowingly, often times by being inspired by a new ingredient or technique that we have learned from a peer.

I have been into salt curing egg yolks for quite some time, a technique which I picked up from the super talented Marc Vetri, of Vetri Ristorante, in Philly. I have had a great deal of success with this, from adding to

smoked pasta, to curing and shaving as "botarga," but I think can safely say that I have taken that concept and pulled that salted egg in as many directions as it can go for now!

As far as new trends, I am greatly influenced by some of the great work being done in St. John's, Newfoundland, by Chef Jeremy Charles (my wife Dana is from Newfoundland and Merchant Tavern is doing beautiful food). In particular, I am a big fan of their use of local seaweed, which I have recently been working into my different styles of dashi, and even curing fish and some different vegetables with seaweed.

What's next for you: I am really excited to be closing in on our one-year anniversary in December and it has been such a great year for all of us at The Cottage in Westport. I feel as though we are just getting started and have so many more ways that we want to express ourselves with our cuisine.

We have a really big surprise on the way for The Cottage...and also beyond...looking forward to that long awaited trip to Japan!

CHEF

Gregori Peña

THE NATIONAL
Greenwich, CT, thenational-ct.com

How you define innovation in the kitchen: Innovation is always striving to take a dish or technique one step further than what is expected, and having your audience respond positively to your risk.

First memorable dish you made: Daniel Boloud's sea bass paupiette. With its classic techniques and flavors, it was something I was proud to recreate.

Favorite innovative dish locally: I really like what the team at Bar Sugo is doing with their meatball program. Meatballs are hard to do well, and theirs are fantastic.

Favorite new spin you put on a classic dish:

“Innovation means evolving with flavors, ingredients and techniques—it doesn't necessarily have to be a breakthrough discovery.” —MOGAN ANTHONY

“Innovation is always striving to take a dish or technique one step further than what is expected, and having your audience respond positively to your risk.” —GREGORI PEÑA

Our take on the classic sundae, which is made with rhubarb, strawberries, lemon cake, caramelized banana, vanilla and strawberry ice creams.

Food trend you're into (and over!): Into: Very happy with the fact that more restaurants are using unexpected spices to add a depth of flavor to dishes. Over: Arancini.

What's next for your restaurant: We are always trying to push ourselves and grow. As we're coming up on our one-year anniversary, we have many exciting initiatives in the works, including our recently launched lunch program as well as a series of curated dinners that will each have a different focus each month.

CHEF

Tony Pham

MECHA NOODLE BAR

South Norwalk, Fairfield and New Haven, CT, mechanoodlebar.com

How you define innovation in the kitchen:

“Creativity, as has been said, consists largely of rearranging what we know in order to find out what we do not know. Hence, to think creatively, we must be able to look afresh at what we normally take for granted.”

— George Kneller

Highlight of your career so far: Being able to run a company that offers health insurance, employee benefits, and above industry standard wages. It wasn't easy but my staff is able to make a career in this tough industry and that is a great feeling.

First memorable dish you made: I believe it was making dinner for my family. I fried a whole fish with a tamarind-tomato chili sauce. It was quite a task to prep the fish and make the sauce from scratch at the age of 12.

Best cooking advice you ever got: I will never forget what Chef Kim Pak Chai told me as we were making an edamame puree: “Adding vinegar goes a long way. Just a

touch in vegetables, purees, sauces, stews, etc., will heighten flavors.”

Food trend you're into (and over!): Kelp is the new superfood! Read up on it.

What's next for your you: We are opening up Mecha Noodle Bar in New Haven this September, which I am excited about. I really enjoy the New Haven community and it just so happens that I was able to find a great spot not long after the Norwalk location opened. I've been scouting the area for years and I think it's the perfect time to join the community. It's growing, it's artsy, it's raw, and the pizza is, you know, the best in the country. As long as the job market continues to increase and the colleges continue to invest, New Haven will be a premier destination spot for all.

CHEF

Robin Selden

MARCIA SELDEN CATERING

Stamford, CT, marciaselden.com

How you define innovation in the kitchen:

I'm a catering chef and every menu that we create is custom designed. I'm constantly being challenged to be creative and innovative. I've designed foods that hang

from a ceiling, secretly come out from behind a curtain or come from interactive chef's stations that have excitement like my favorite “Pull my Mozzarella” station where we literally are pulling the cheese at the station. These innovative ideas create fun and excitement for the guests and are what we are all about at Marcia Selden Catering. Don't get me wrong, we do many a beautiful wedding and sit down gala dinner for 1,000 but even then we try to create something unique and special.

Highlight of your career so far: This has been a pretty stellar career year for me! To be named the President of the International Caterers Association (first chef ever) and then awarded their Chef of the Year...blew my mind! The icing on the cake was being named one of your Innovative Chefs. I'm very proud of all of this and have worked really hard over the past 20 years to help build our brand and company.

First memorable dish you made: There are a few but I probably would say a twist on my Cuban grandmother's paella.

Best cooking advice you ever got: That my food should look as good as it tastes (from my mom).

Favorite innovative dish locally: I'm obsessed and can't get enough of the shaved broccoli at Kawa Ni.

Favorite new spin you put on a classic dish: Love the deconstructed lobster wellington that we just did for a big wedding.

Food trend you're into (and over!): Still loving poke, in fact I am teaching a course about it in D.C. next week at The Art of Catering Food Conference, which is put on by Catersource. So over cedar plank salmon, which so many of our clients continue to request.

What's next for for you: We will stick to what we do best, which is catering. Excited to start marketing our NYC venue Above Twelve. We've been so busy that we haven't even added it to our website and have had the space for two years in December... great problem to have!

“Adding vinegar goes a long way. Just a touch in vegetables, purees, sauces, stews, etc., will heighten flavors.” —TONY PHAM

Robin Selden

