
DAVID LAY JR.

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PROFILE

Chef and culinary leader with 12+ years of experience in chef-driven, high-volume, and ingredient-forward kitchens. Known for building strong teams, developing crave-able menus, and translating creative vision into consistent, guest-focused execution. I lead with integrity, clarity, and high standards, and build environments where food, people, and culture are taken seriously.

CULINARY POINT OF VIEW

Seasonal, California-influenced cuisine expressed through bold, balanced flavors • Plant-curious cooking that challenges and satisfies • A strong savory and pastry foundation that supports depth and range • Scratch cooking translated into systems that scale • Kitchens built on pride, discipline, and accountability

OBJECTIVE

To lead a chef-driven, ingredient-forward restaurant and build a culture that delivers an exceptional level of hospitality on a nightly basis, exceeding the expectations of both guests and the team, while holding high standards for craft, care, and consistency.

EXPERIENCE

CHEF DE CUISINE • KETTNER EXCHANGE • SAN DIEGO, CA — 2022-2025

(MICHELIN BIB GOURMAND-RECOGNIZED, CHEF-DRIVEN, HIGH-VOLUME CALIFORNIAN)

- ❖ Led a 16-person brigade through 450+ nightly covers with precision, pacing, and consistency at peak volume.
- ❖ Oversaw execution of a seasonally influenced, scratch-driven menu built around high-quality proteins, fresh produce, and layered sauces.
- ❖ Elevated plating, seasoning, and finish standards to ensure every dish felt intentional, composed, and guest-ready even at scale.
- ❖ Oversaw, maintained, and continuously refined prep systems and station flows to support speed without sacrificing detail, cleanliness, or quality of execution.
- ❖ Built a culture of professionalism, pride, and accountability through hands-on leadership, training, and example, and partnered closely with FOH and ownership to align culinary execution with service pacing, guest expectations, and brand identity.

CHEF DE PARTIE/TOURNANT • JUNIPER & IVY • SAN DIEGO, CA — 2021

(MODERN FINE DINING, HIGH-STANDARD EXECUTION)

- ❖ Supported daily production and service across multiple stations, progressing from prep to tournant responsibilities.
- ❖ Completed both pastry and savory prep, maintaining precise mise en place and execution standards across disciplines.
- ❖ Worked banquets and private events with Chef Sean Maloney, supporting large-format execution with fine-dining standards.
- ❖ Stepped into different stations as needed to support service flow, coverage, and consistency while executing complex preparations with accuracy, cleanliness, and respect for technique and timing.

CORPORATE CHEF • MSG HOSPITALITY • SAN DIEGO, CA — 2025

(MULTI-CONCEPT HOSPITALITY GROUP)

- ❖ Brought in to elevate food quality, execution, and standards; embedded at a flagship location.
- ❖ Focused on stabilizing systems, refining execution, and strengthening kitchen culture.
- ❖ After completing my tenure, I chose to pursue opportunities more aligned with my long-term leadership direction.

LINE COOK • OB SURF LODGE • SAN DIEGO, CA — 2021

(HIGH-VOLUME, CASUAL COASTAL KITCHEN)

- ❖ Supported opening and closing duties, daily prep, and execution across dinner and brunch service.
- ❖ Worked collaboratively across stations to maintain service flow, organization, and consistency during high-volume periods.

CHEF DE PARTIE • KETTNER EXCHANGE • SAN DIEGO, CA — 2016-2017

(CHEF-DRIVEN, NEW AMERICAN PROGRESSIVE WITH PAN-ASIAN INFLUENCES — UPSCALE CASUAL)

- ❖ Executed garde manger station in a high-volume, chef-driven kitchen with a focus on clean flavors, consistency, and speed of service.
- ❖ Prepared cold dishes, garnishes, and supporting components with precision and strong attention to detail while maintaining organization and cleanliness during peak service periods.

CHEF DE PARTIE • DECOY DOCKSIDE DINING • SAN MARCOS, CA — 2016

(COASTAL CALIFORNIA, HIGH-VOLUME, SCRATCH-DRIVEN)

- ❖ Worked across fry, garde manger, and saucier stations in a fast-paced coastal kitchen, maintaining clean mise en place and consistent execution during high-volume service.
- ❖ Developed and contributed scratch recipes adopted into the menu, including a BBQ sauce, pomegranate molasses dressing, and apple cider vinaigrette.
- ❖ Supported daily prep and service flow with flexibility, reliability, and strong station discipline.

CHEF DE PARTIE • DAVANTI ENOTECA • DEL MAR, CA — 2014-2016

(ITALIAN-INSPIRED, INGREDIENT-DRIVEN, HIGH-VOLUME)

- ❖ Ran garde manger station with an emphasis on clean flavors, consistency, and efficient execution in a high-volume service environment.
- ❖ Prepared sauces, dressings, and antipasti components while maintaining organization, timing, and quality standards, building a strong foundation in seasoning, handling, and execution.

EDUCATION

MIRA COSTA COLLEGE • OCEANSIDE, CA — ASSOCIATES DEGREE, 2014

SKILLS

Culinary development and menu refinement • Flavor composition and balance • Service leadership at the pass • Team development and kitchen culture • Prep flow and station organization • Cost discipline without compromising quality • Composure under pressure • Clear, direct communication • Guest-centered execution • Protein fabrication, including whole-fish butchery and poultry fabrication.

CERTIFICATIONS

- ❖ ServSafe Food Protection Manager (exp. 10/31/2026)
- ❖ Kitchen's For Good • Hospitality Management • San Diego, CA • Certificate, 2023

REFERENCES

Available upon request.