

MELISSA MAYER

CHEF ARTIST ENTREPRENEUR

Melissa Mayer is a chef and an artist with a purpose, balancing advocacy, education and pleasure for the sake of her gastronomic mission. Melissa is a vital voice for the principle that what we eat can change our culture, our environment and our lives. She brings her focus to paper, to art, to community fundraising and of course, to the plate, delivering equal parts awareness and pleasure.

The turning point in Melissa's culinary career was sparked by a mentorship and travel. At the age of 30, Melissa apprenticed with Internationally trained chef, Ann Bryan, a former chef to the Kennedy family. That apprenticeship led to International travel and culturally rich experiences which have heavily shaped Melissa's approach to cuisine. Bold flavors and care for the best ingredients play a role in every dish. Melissa was given the opportunity to showcase her passion and talent as the Executive Chef of The Guild Restaurant + Lounge, teaming with a designer and fabricator to create a dining experience unique to San Diego in the unlikely neighborhood of Barrio Logan. Dishes were presented in stainless steel vessels fabricated on site in an adjoining metal fabrication studio. Melissa honed her Executive Chef skills there, crafting creative dishes and earning accolades and awards for her intensely flavored and hyper fresh menus. The Guild Restaurant + Lounge put Melissa on the culinary map. Her desire to create unforgettable meals was also being matched with passion for sustainable food sources and knowing where our food comes from.

Since 2006, Melissa has committed herself to the principles of the sustainable food movement. She has advocated for farmers and consumers, educated the public on the topic of sustainability and traceability. Melissa has been an instrumental engineer of several fundraisers for Slow Food Urban San Diego, ARTS and the San Diego Unified School District through her work as a chef and artist with Martini Media and as a member of Cooks Confab.

Melissa has built her career on passion and integrity. She has spent valuable time in the kitchen and in the field, literally. She has used public venues as educational platforms to speak on behalf of producers and purveyors. Utilizing her influence as a chef, Melissa continues to promote the value of eating local, sustainable and connecting the dots between the consumer and the food source. Melissa believes our work should serve a greater purpose. She believes in the power of community and cultural preservation. And when engaging the palate, Melissa strives to create cuisine that evolved out of what the land is telling you it wants to grow. Nature knows best.
