

PASTRY CHEF ADRIAN MENDOZA

Herb & Wood

Anchoring the ambitious pastry and baking program at Herb & Wood is Executive Pastry Chef Adrian Mendoza. Mendoza worked alongside Chef Brian Malarkey as executive pastry chef at Herringbone, and Searsucker, and previously worked at Spago in Beverly Hills, a Michelin two-star restaurant. As one of the most talented pastry chefs in the country, Mendoza's offerings range from exquisite desserts to freshly baked breads. Known for his seasonal soufflés, flakey croissants, and delectable desserts, Mendoza utilizes unique ingredients to create custom flavor pairings for Herb & Wood's pastries, brunch items, and desserts. Sourcing the freshest ingredients from purveyors all over Southern California, Mendoza's menu changes seasonally to reflect the best flavors and ingredients available.

What is the heart of your culinary passion?

The fact that we are in one of the best areas for amazing produce year-

round, and being able to share our knowledge with the new generation of future chefs.

What are you most proud of in your culinary career?

I'm most proud to serve our guests and have them speak highly of our craft. I'm proud that I haven't given up this challenging industry; and from that comes the drive and excitement about food, and the science and history behind it.

What advice would you offer to young chefs eager to build a successful career?

Closed mouths don't get fed. Ask questions, be curious, take notes—and I mean notes about everything. Hell, write a culinary journal. I wish I did when I was younger. All I can say is be patient, maintain a positive attitude, keep calm, wear comfortable shoes, be prepared to work for your life, and be prepared to fail at things more than you can succeed at them. Instagram is the new "Food Network," so use that as inspiration, but not as a way to mislead general population. Mistakes make up for a strong chef.

