

Reference for Patrice Ventresca

By Galen Ventresca Barker

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I have been told countless times by friends and family at dinner parties or holidays just how lucky I am to have a world class chef for a Mom. Trust me when I say that they are absolutely correct. Being Patrice's son for just over twenty years now, I am in a privileged position to speak on her talents and abilities in and out of the kitchen. I cannot count the times that I have been busy in my room and found myself drawn like a moth to a flame into the kitchen to "taste test" whatever was simmering on the stovetop. Of course, the dishes were seasoned to perfection; nonetheless I found myself returning to reassure that fact. I've been a witness to the creation of an amazing myriad of dishes that span the globe. I've seen Patrice prepare dishes from Greece to France to Jamaica, then back again to California: from kalamata olive studded greek salads to bouillabaisse to jerked chicken to cherry cider brined wood smoked duck. I've witnessed her eloquently present simple bowls of cherries to four layered chocolate passion bars -which are truly one of my favorite things on the planet and the centerpiece of her 2001 online chocolates company; to a 12 layer cherry chocolate cake that is now our family birthday tradition. The talent that Patrice holds in the arena of food is immense. I've participated in her catered events for hundreds of people- with the most pressing of time crunches and with the most challenging of dishes- yet her steady head under pressure and her unflinching attention to detail has cemented her reputation as chef extraordinaire to not only family and friends, but to her most discriminating clients.

Whenever I've attended dinners at a friend's table it is usually preceded by the warning "well I'm sure it's nothing like your Mom's but..." Of course after spending years in the kitchen with my Mom and understanding just how much effort, time and genius goes into crafting these meals, I credit her for instilling the idea that you must *always* express your appreciation to the chef (which in our house- to the chagrin of my sister and me- included doing the dishes). Patrice ignited a passion for food that will live on forever within the hearts and souls of my sister and me. To this day, the wafting scent of a well-stocked spice cabinet ranks high among my list of favorite things.

I have seen my Mom tackle innumerable challenges with passion, creativity, enthusiasm, and an unflinching talent for transforming every meal, every morsel into a lifelong memory. Thus, I cannot recommend Patrice Ventresca highly enough for any position where attaining excellence is key.



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