

ONLINE: Our Tastemakers share some of their favorite recipes



# OUR TASTEMAKERS *2013*

**W**hether it's an emphasis on the use of locally sourced ingredients or a passion for pairing flavors, the chefs, sommeliers and restaurateurs influencing South Florida's dining scene know that to be successful, a dedication to excellence is a must. Meet the Tastemakers of 2013: influential personalities who strive for culinary excellence every day.

BY REBECCA CAHILLY

## HAMID HASHEMI

President and CEO  
iPic Entertainment, [www.ipictheaters.com](http://www.ipictheaters.com)



Hamid Hashemi, local South Florida entrepreneur and president and CEO of iPic Entertainment, is regarded as a visionary in the entertainment industry. Hashemi has over 20 years of experience owning and operating entertainment venues and, as the founder of the popular Muvico and the Premier theaters, created the luxury theater and restaurant concept. His vision of transforming the movie-going experience was brought to life with the creation of the first iPic

Theater in 2007 — a luxury theater experience where viewers may choose to dine at the on-location restaurant, Tanzy, or be served by a personal attendant from the comfort of their movie seats. Today, the iPic Theater concept continues to grow nationwide with the opening of a ninth location in Boca Raton's Mizner Park.

**“Eat well, drink well and enjoy life.”**

**How do you feel you have influenced the dining experience here?** Our goal is to create a place where friends meet friends and share stories and experiences over a tasty and conversation-provoking dinner. We strive to provide our guests with an exceptional culinary and entertaining experience. Our work has just begun and we are committed to bringing groundbreaking experiences to the dining and entertainment world.

**What is your culinary ethos?** Eat well, drink well and enjoy life. Use the freshest ingredients available and try new flavors.

**What's next?** In 2013, aside from opening new and exciting locations, we will be introducing technology that will empower our guests and improve their experience.



## ANDRE LANE

Corporate Chef, iPic Entertainment, Tanzy Restaurant, Tanzy Express, [www.tanzrestaurant.com](http://www.tanzrestaurant.com)



Chef Andre “Dre” Lane has over 25 years of culinary experience and has been recognized for his work while under the mentorship of renowned chefs that include Wolfgang Puck, David Burke, Jean Francois Meteigner and Bill Starbuck. As the Corporate Chef of iPic Entertainment and its Tanzy restaurants, Chef Dre is focused on creating a memorable dining experience for each guest. Chef Dre adds a modern twist to the old world, artisanal Italian recipes offered at the Tanzy location

in Boca Raton, and collaborated with President and CEO Hamid Hashemi on its award-winning “Parma Bar.” Dre is also the mastermind behind the Tanzy Express “dining in the dark” concept, which serves iPic Theater guests.

**“My personal motto is to cultivate and incorporate habits of excellence.”**

**How do you feel you have influenced culinary trends and/or the dining experience here?** I've been able to introduce a new, surprising and different approach to classical dishes while maintaining the integrity and history of those dishes.

**What is your culinary ethos?** Each dish should be what the guest wants; make each item an impactful and memorable dining experience — something that the guest will remember and will talk about with friends.

**How has your style evolved over the years?** I won't compromise on freshness, especially with fish and meat. I want the guest to immediately taste the freshness and quality of the ingredients.

**What's next?** I plan to continue to introduce fresh and new ingredients, supplying the guests with nutritional information on each dish so that they can become educated on what they are putting into their bodies. I will also be going to Italy on a culinary adventure to gain invaluable knowledge on pasta, cheese and bread-making techniques.

## STEPHANE LANG-WILLAR

Owner, Stéphane's, [www.stephanesrestaurant.com](http://www.stephanesrestaurant.com)



Savvy restaurateur Stéphane Lang-Willar, owner of Stéphane's American & French Cuisine in Boca Raton, is no stranger to the culinary world, having owned and successfully developed the first restaurant chain in France to go public, Leon de Bruxelles. Originally from Paris, Stéphane has over 30 years of experience and expertise in the industry and is committed to providing the healthiest and most sublime cuisine to his patrons. When it comes to dishes incorporating mussels, he could be called one of the world's connoisseurs, and his passion for pairing flavors distinguishes him as one of 2013's Tastemakers.

**How do you feel you have influenced culinary trends and/or the dining experience here?** Stéphane's is the first restaurant here to use the *sous-vide* cooking method, a technique invented in France. Our Executive Chef, John Belleme, trained with Bruno Goussault, the pioneer of *sous-vide*, to learn all the secrets of how to use this method. This is how we are able to serve perfectly cooked, tender and juicy meat every time.

I [also] have made it my mission to educate people on why the word ‘pairing’ is so important and how it can dramatically improve one's dining experience. Master Sommelier Virginia Philip has created our beautiful wine list, and together we created a ‘pairing’ icon on our iPad menus that features Ms. Philip's suggestion of wine, beer or even champagne to best accompany a dish. This expands the universe of flavor that we offer and creates a perfect harmony between our wines and food.

**How has your style evolved over the years?** My priority is, of course, the quality of the food we serve. We also observe all ocean guidelines to protect endangered and overfished species. We serve antibiotic-free meat from animals humanely raised on a 100 percent vegetarian diet. Our pledge is to offer only the freshest and healthiest foods to our guests.

**What are your three favorite ingredients to work with?** My number one favorite ingredient to work with is a secret that Executive Chef John and I keep within the walls of my kitchen, but I can tell you that my next three favorite ingredients are:

*House-made crème fraiche — a thick, rich, custard of a cream that is also France's favorite form of cream for cooking.*

*Yuzu — a citrus fruit and plant originating in East Asia, known for its characteristically strong aroma.*

*Madagascar Green Peppercorn — adds a delicious twist to some of our dishes*

**“In order to live well, one must eat well.”**





## ANGELO ELIA

*Chef/Restaurateur  
Casa D'Angelo, D'Angelo Pizza, D'Angelo Trattoria*



Hailing from Salerno, Italy, Angelo Elia began his culinary career in the United States working in some of New York City's most prestigious kitchens, including the Four Seasons and the family operated La Cisterna. After relocating to South Florida, he opened his first restaurant in 1998, the famed Casa D'Angelo in Fort Lauderdale. A passion for old-world techniques inspired him to create a menu of traditional Tuscan dishes using only the finest ingredients and making virtually

everything from scratch. In recent years, Elia has gone on to open a second location in the Bahamas at the Atlantis Hotel to much acclaim and a third in Boca Raton. In 2010 he opened the casual lunch and dinner eatery D'Angelo's Pizza, Wine Bar and Tapas in Fort Lauderdale and in 2011, the Roman eatery D'Angelo Trattoria in Delray Beach. With each, Elia has been steadfast in his commitment to quality, receiving numerous awards and accolades, including *Zagat's America's Top Restaurants* and *Wine Spectator's Best of Award of Excellence* consecutively for the past 12 years. December 2012 marked Chef Elia's third trip to the James Beard Foundation where he and Executive Chef Rickie Piper prepared a six-course dinner for Beard members, among whom he is known as the "Italian Maestro."

**"Always put the customer first and deliver the best possible quality in both food and service."**

**How do you feel that you have influenced culinary trends and/or the dining experience here?** Decades ago, when I first moved to South Florida, it was very difficult to find some ingredients. Since then, I have worked with my purveyors to find the finest authentic Italian ingredients, so I can offer my customers a true Italian culinary experience. The same principle also applies to our wine cellar. We are proud to have an award-winning wine list, which offers one of the most extensive Italian selections in South Florida.

**What is your culinary ethos?** To always offer the highest quality of food and to give our patrons the best possible dining experience.

**What are your three favorite ingredients to work with?** Fish, fresh herbs and extra virgin olive oil

**What's next?** In 2013 we are opening two new locations for D'Angelo's Pizza, Wine Bar and Tapas. One location will be in Weston and one in West Boca Raton.



## LISABET SUMMA

*Culinary Director, Rocco's Tacos, Big Time Restaurant Group, www.roccostacos.com*



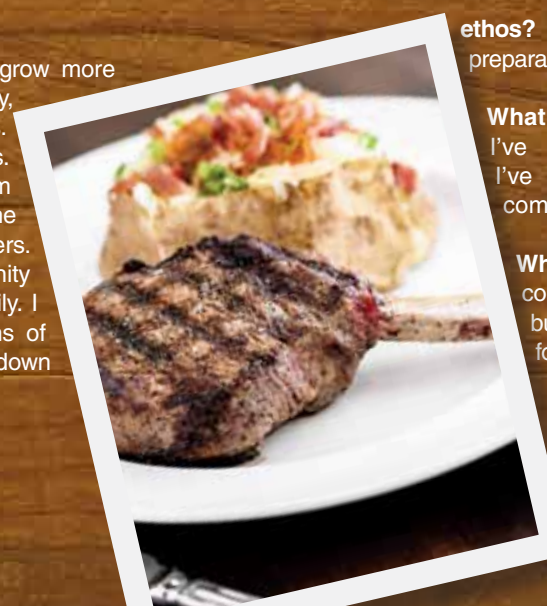
With culinary roots cultivated under the tutelage of famed chefs Norman Van Aken and Charlie Trotter in Chicago, Lisabet Summa first made her mark on the South Florida scene when she joined with partners Todd Herbst and Bill Watson and opened Big City Tavern and in turn formed the Big Time Restaurant Group. For the next 15 years, Summa served as Corporate Chef for the group, leading culinary development and kitchen operations for the group's varied restaurants, which include City Cellar Wine Bar & Grill in West Palm Beach and New York, Big City Tavern in Fort Lauderdale, City Oyster & Sushi Bar in Delray Beach and Grease Burger Bar in West Palm Beach. Most recently, the group

joined forces with Rocco Mangel, the visionary behind Rocco's Tacos & Tequila Bar, which now has locations in Boca Raton, West Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale. For Rocco's Tacos, Summa helped to articulate a culinary concept that is a healthy mix of authentic and "street-market cooking" Mexican dishes.

**How do you feel that you have influenced culinary trends and/or the dining experience here?** I have guided our kitchens to a common culinary goal — perfection on a plate-by-plate basis. This philosophy was inspired when I worked with Charlie Trotter in Chicago in the 1980s. I vividly remember him announcing to the kitchen staff just before service, 'every night we strive for perfection!'

**What is your culinary ethos?** Being a chef is about harnessing natural products from the earth, manmade tools and techniques, and the efforts of coworkers to create a memorable experience for our guests, the diners. The mark of a great chef is when the combination of their life experience and professional expertise allows them to present a dish that creates an emotional reaction from the guest. Those who love to cook bring a full heart and rich memories to their work and the guests taste it.

**What's next?** The US public will continue to grow more interested in organic foods, eating more healthfully, sustainable farming traditions and local markets. I look forward to helping address these trends. I also believe we are in the eye of the storm regarding the public's respect and interest in the cooking crafts: canning, bread making and others. There is an improved consciousness and community interest in eating together with friends and family. I believe families will follow the recommendations of recent research that recommends a family sit-down meal at least once a week.



## Kevin Blair

*Managing Director, Grille 401, Piñon Grill, Brimstone Woodfire Grill, www.grille401.com*



Kevin Blair has over 20 years of experience in the restaurant and hospitality industry, holding numerous roles over the years that range from food service and logistics to real estate selection and human resources. In 2007, he co-founded the Rainmaker Restaurant Group with business partner Jeffrey R. Anderson and opened Brimstone Woodfire Grill in Pembroke Pines. They went on to launch the successful Piñon Grill in Boca Raton, known for a menu that plays with a variety of flavors. Most recently, the group has opened Grille 401 on Las Olas Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale, where diners enjoy an innovative menu of freshly made, in-house dishes featuring fresh and locally sourced ingredients.

**How do you feel that you have influenced culinary trends and/or the dining experience here?** We focus on freshly prepared foods that do not compromise on quality and proper preparation and presentation. We love South

**"I believe in supporting our local communities and residents."**

Florida and want to continue to increase our role and presence in this market. We love the fresh and local culinary concept and are determined to bring more of that to the South Florida market.

**What is your culinary ethos?** Fresh product, fresh storage, fresh preparation!

**What do you refuse to compromise?** I've never compromised on quality. I've made mistakes, but I've never compromised.

**What's next?** We are going to continue to methodically build our business and become a culinary foundation in this market.

## VIRGINIA PHILIP

Master Sommelier  
Owner, Virginia Philip Wine Shop & Academy  
[www.virginiaphilipwineshopacademy.com](http://www.virginiaphilipwineshopacademy.com)



When Virginia Philip received her accreditation as Master Sommelier, she was only the 10th woman in the world to reach such an achievement. In 2002, she earned the title, "Best Sommelier in the United States." Fortunately for those of us who reside in South Florida, she is based here. Philip moved to South Florida in 2000 to join the prestigious Breakers resort in Palm Beach as Wine Director. In 2011, she fulfilled a longtime goal of owning her own wine store when she opened the Virginia Philip Wineshop & Academy in West Palm Beach. Philip consults with a variety of restaurants and is active in the annual Palm Beach Food & Wine Festival and is a judge this year in the charity American Fine Wine Competition and Gala (coming up April 4, [www.americanfinewinecompetition.org](http://www.americanfinewinecompetition.org)). She has appeared on *The Today Show* and Food Network and has been featured in a variety of food and wine publications. Not only does her shop sell fine wines, it offers wine education programs sharing her extensive experience and expertise.

**How do you feel you have influenced wine/culinary trends and/or the dining experience here?** Food and wine have become so fascinating and interesting to the American public. When I decided to enter this profession, I was intrigued with the challenge and diversity of the topics involved.

Along the way, I have met so many interesting people who have become friends and have visited so many interesting places. My goal became to share that passion with as many people as possible. Through my work at The Breakers, and the objective of my shop, I believe I can touch more people and teach as much as possible to a wider audience.

**What is your wine philosophy?** Wine tastes and dislikes are linked to the individual. I never try to convince someone to like a wine I like or dislike a wine I don't like. My approach is simplistic with the desire to not alienate the consumer or guest with too much information or by making them feel their opinion is inconsequential. If someone wants to drink White Zinfandel, then they should be able to do that. I will try to taste them on a sweeter style Riesling however, to educate them, and experience other options they may not be familiar with. I try to approach wine in a very simple way that translates to the client so they walk away feeling like they learned something they can use every day.

**What do you refuse to compromise?** I refuse to compromise on poorly made wines or wines that have little history but insist upon charging ridiculously high prices.

**What are your three favorite varietals?** If I had to choose, Meursault and red Burgundy interspaced with a great bottle of Bordeaux always does the trick.

**What's next?** The shop is still a work in progress and more and more people find out about us every week. I love the diversity of my work between my role at The Breakers and my shop. The two are within very close proximity of each other (about a mile), so running back and forth between the two excites me and re-energizes me.

**"You cannot possibly like every wine you taste. So drink what you like."**

PHOTO: LILA