

CHEF ANDREW MOLEN

HIS CULINARY JOURNEY IS A CUT ABOVE THE REST

—BY SEAN-PATRICK M. HILLMAN—

In the ever-evolving landscape of New York’s culinary scene, few have made a mark as indelible as Chef Andrew Molen. From his early days in his family’s restaurant to his current ventures across the East Coast and beyond, Molen’s journey is a testament to passion, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to excellence.

To be painfully honest, I have been friends with Chef Andrew for about 30 years. He was basically born into the business as his mom, Sandra Arcara, owned a bar lounge on the Upper East Side called Swells that catered to a lot of my fellow former “BRATS” in those days. Sandra also created a personal favorite supper club in the early ’90s called Tatou. My friends and I used to throw parties there on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the summer. As to Chef Andrew, well, my readers, you know I am not one to just give a pass. And while I could not be prouder of the hard work, dedication, talent and passion Chef Andrew has dedicated to his craft, he will always be Andrew to me.

A CULINARY LEGACY BEGINS

By age 11, Chef Andrew was already immersed in his mother’s business operations, washing dishes and learning the intricacies of the restaurant and food trades.

Molen’s hands-on experience in his family’s establishments laid a solid foundation for his future endeavors.

CLIMBING THE CULINARY LADDER

He honed his skills in some of New York’s most esteemed restaurants, including Insieme at the Michelangelo Hotel, Chez Josephine, Southgate Restaurant at the Jumeirah Essex House, The Plaza Food Hall, Sunset Beach by AB Hotels, Restaurant Gordon Ramsay at The London Hotel, Topping Rose House by Jean-Georges, and Todd English Enterprises. These experiences not only refined his culinary techniques but also instilled in him a deep understanding of restaurant operations and guest relations.

ENTREPRENEURIAL VENTURES AND COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

Beyond the bustling streets of Manhattan, Chef Andrew expanded his culinary hustle and bustle to Ludlow, Vermont, where he became a pivotal figure in the local dining scene. As the managing partner and chef at multiple establishments, including Sam’s Steak House, Mr. Darcy’s, Off The Rails, Alta Tuscan Grille, and Calcutta’s, he brought a blend of innovation and tradition to the region. His commitment to community was profoundly evident during the catastrophic flooding in Ludlow in July 2023. Molen transformed the Fox Run Golf Club into an emergency shelter and meal distribution hub, ensuring that residents and first responders received warm meals and support during the crisis.



PRIVATE CHEFFING AND EVENT CATERING

Molen’s reputation as a private chef is unparalleled. His personalized approach to in-home dining experiences has garnered acclaim across New York, Boston, and the Hamptons, and even as far as Colorado. By collaborating closely with clients, he crafts bespoke menus that cater to individual tastes and dietary preferences, turning ordinary meals into extraordinary culinary events. On a larger scale, Chef Andrew has helped to elevate high-profile events like The Masters with his award-winning culinary excellence. He has entertained and fed some of the most prominent business moguls and entertainers in the world at private events in Palm Beach, the Hamptons, Connecticut, New York City, and beyond; often blending gourmet cuisine with impeccable event execution through various partnerships.

INNOVATIONS AT STOREFRONTS

Chef Andrew Molen has also been integral to the launch of food businesses across the region. From bakeries to casual dining and everything in between, Chef Andrew’s combined kitchen and business acumen has delivered an unprecedented level of success for many small businesses. Whether it was fare that catered to the carnivore or the vegan, he has certainly shown depth and diversity in his work.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Chef Andrew Molen’s journey is a blend of deep-rooted tradition and forward-thinking innovation. His ability to adapt, lead, and inspire within the culinary world sets him apart. Whether through his community initiatives, private dining experiences, or new ventures, Molen continues to redefine what it means to be a chef in today’s dynamic food landscape.

For those seeking a culinary experience that marries passion with precision, Chef Andrew Molen stands as a beacon of excellence in New York’s gastronomic community. And I, for one, cannot wait to see what he does next.

To learn more, visit andrewmolen.com