

Michael Mina

Michael Mina's story is one of two decades of influence, passion and achievement. With the October 2010 opening of MICHAEL MINA, his eponymous signature restaurant at 252 California Street in San Francisco, Michael is at the helm and once again in the kitchen at the same location (formerly AQUA) and city where he first established his culinary reputation 20 years ago. The *San Francisco Chronicle* three and a half star winner MICHAEL MINA in San Francisco is Michael's crown jewel and marks the newest phase and ultimate expression in the career of the James Beard Award-winning chef. During its first year, MICHAEL MINA was awarded one Michelin star and "Restaurant of the Year" in *Esquire's* annual 2011 "Best Restaurants" issue.

With accolades including James Beard Foundation "Who's Who of Food & Beverage" inductee in 2013, *Gayot* Restaurateur of the Year 2011, *Food Arts* Silver Spoon Award winner May 2011, *Bon Appétit* Chef of the Year 2005, *San Francisco Magazine* Chef of the Year 2005, as well as the International Food and Beverage Forum's Restaurateur of the Year 2005, Michael continues to dazzle the culinary world with bold dining concepts that have contributed to San Francisco's reputation as a world-class epicurean destination and made him an integral part of the dining scene across the country.

Michael's culinary and business vision led to the founding of his company, Mina Group, with partner Andre Agassi in 2002. Under the auspices of Mina Group, he has opened 26 operations including MICHAEL MINA, CLOCK BAR, RN74, BOURBON STEAK, ARCADIA, STONEHILL TAVERN, STRIPSTEAK, WIT & WISDOM, PUB 1842, THE HANDLE BAR, MICHAEL MINA 74, PABU, THE RAMEN BAR, BOURBON PUB, LOCALE MARKET, and BARDOT BRASSERIE. In addition to 24 concepts, Michael launched the Michael Mina Wine Club in fall of 2013 as a way to bring many of the wines featured in his restaurants into the guest's home.

At the start of his career, Michael was presented with the opportunity of a lifetime with then Executive Chef of the Bel Air Hotel in Los Angeles, George Morrone. The two were asked to develop a concept and create a menu for an upscale seafood restaurant in San Francisco – the city Michael had dreamed of calling home one day. Welcomed to San Francisco by a major earthquake his second day in the city, he was unfazed and went to work immediately under George’s direction. Michael dedicated himself to creating a complete dining experience – training the entire kitchen staff personally and refining the menu as chef de cuisine.

AQUA opened to rave reviews and national acclaim in 1991. Michael served as AQUA’s executive chef from 1993 to 2002, where he was awarded Rising Star Chef of the Year in 1997 and Best California Chef in 2002 by the James Beard Foundation.

Born in Cairo, Egypt and raised in Ellensburg, Wash., Michael has had a love affair with the kitchen, creating memorable dining experiences for guests from a very early age. Michael’s epicurean journey began in 1987 at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park. During those 18 months of formal schooling, he spent his weekends sharpening his natural talents with hands-on experience in Charlie Palmer’s kitchen at the upscale Aureole in New York City.

Michael has been honored with numerous accolades, including the Michelin two-star award and *San Francisco Chronicle*’s four-star award for the original MICHAEL MINA at San Francisco’s Westin St. Francis on Union Square, Michelin’s one-star award for MICHAEL MINA in Las Vegas as well as induction into the American Gaming Association’s Hall of Fame in 2007. In 2013, he was inducted into the James Beard Foundation’s “Who’s Who of Food & Beverage in America.” Additionally, he is an esteemed member of Bocuse d’Or USA and the CIA Society of Fellows. Michael has been featured in such national media as *Bon Appétit*, *Food & Wine*, *Gourmet*, *Food Arts*, *Cigar Aficionado*, *Newsweek*, *TIME*, *Robb Report*, *Travel & Leisure*, *Wine Spectator*, and others, in addition to the Food Network’s “After Midnight,” Fine Living Network’s “Opening Soon,” Pat O’Brien’s “The Insider,” the CBS Early Show, the NBC Today Show and Fox’s syndicated “Good Day Live.” He has been a featured guest chef at the James Beard House numerous times; cooked for three U.S. presidents: Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama; and has been a guest speaker at C.I.A. in Hyde Park and at other culinary institutes in California.

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