

# BOUCHON

## CHEF BIO

### THOMAS KELLER

Thomas Keller, one of the most inventive American chefs working today, is as renowned for his well-honed culinary skills as he is for his ability to establish a restaurant that's both relaxed yet exciting.

Good food coupled with a memorable social and sensual experience has always been Keller's focus. "Our food is serious," says Keller, "but we also want people to have a good time with it." If the reputations of his restaurants are any indication, he has succeeded.

A native of California, Keller began his culinary career at a young age, working in the Palm Beach restaurant managed by his mother. After serving apprenticeships in Rhode Island, Florida, and the Catskills, Keller relocated to France in 1983, where he worked in several Michelin-starred houses including Guy Savoy and Taillevent. He followed with successful runs at La Reserve and Restaurant Raphael in New York. In 1986, he opened his first restaurant, Raket, also in New York, which resulted in extensive critical acclaim and a loyal clientele.

Five years later, Keller moved westward to California to work as executive chef at Checkers Hotel in Los Angeles. In 1994, he opened The French Laundry in Yountville, which quickly became a destination restaurant known for its innovative, compelling cuisine. His bistro, Bouchon, opened in Yountville in 1998, with Bouchon Bakery following five years later.

In February 2004, Keller brought his distinct style to New York City with Per Se. The restaurant features Keller's French-influenced contemporary American cuisine presented in a classically elegant space, designed by premier restaurant/hotel designer Adam Tihany.

A man of exceptionally high personal standards, Keller values genuine collaboration. Having assembled staffs with equally high standards and expertise within all of his enterprises, he has been able to concentrate on many interests. Keller is the author of the award-winning "*The French Laundry*" cookbook, and released his second book "*Bouchon*," in November 2004. He has collaborated with Raynaud and the design firm Level on a collection of simple, sophisticated white porcelain dinnerware called Point, (in homage to the great French chef and restaurateur, Fernand Point) and has created *Modicum*, a Napa Valley Cabernet; vintage 2000, blended to best accompany the cuisine at The French Laundry and Per Se.

In 2001, Keller was named "America's Best Chef" by *Time Magazine* and World Master of Culinary Arts by a panel of international judges at the Wedgwood Awards. He was the 2004 recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Food Allergy Initiative. He has collected many accolades within the last decade, including consecutive "Best Chef" awards from the James Beard Foundation, the first chef ever to achieve this honor. In 2003, The French Laundry was at the top of "The World's 50 Best Restaurants" list published by London based *Restaurant Magazine*. In 2004, Per Se was honored with a 4-star rating from the *New York Times*; and has since been heralded in top publications such as *Gourmet*, *Food and Wine*, and *New York Magazine*. Per Se was also deemed "Best new restaurant of the year" by *Restaurant Magazine*.

The Michelin Guide New York City gave per se its most prestigious recognition, a three star rating, in both 2006 and 2007. The French Laundry was additionally awarded three stars by the Michelin Guide San Francisco for 2007, making Thomas Keller the only American-born Chef to hold multiple three star ratings.

Chef Keller now has eight restaurant properties in the United States. In addition to The French Laundry, Per Se and Bouchon, branches of Bouchon and Bouchon Bakery opened in Las Vegas in 2004. In early 2006, Bouchon Bakery opened at the Time Warner Center in New York City. Most recently, Ad Hoc, a casual dining establishment inspired by the comfort food Keller enjoyed growing up, opened in Yountville, California.