

Bruce Mason Hill

Biographical Notes

Bruce Hill started cooking when he was 18 years old. A self-trained chef, he began working early on in his career at several historical San Francisco restaurants.

Bruce was part of the culinary “dream team” at *Stars* with Celebrity Chef Jeremiah Tower in the mid 1980’s. Among the top-grossing restaurants in the United States for close to a decade, *Stars* was a landmark restaurant in and is considered one of the birthplaces of California Cuisine.

He moved on to become part of the opening staff and later Sous Chef at *Aqua* in 1990 and then brought *Oritalia* to fame in 1993, whose cuisine was awarded 3.5 stars by the San Francisco Chronicle.

He was recruited to transform the *Waterfront Restaurant* in 1997, overseeing an upscale Asian inspired menu in the dramatic upstairs dining room and a more casual Mediterranean menu in the café downstairs. The *Waterfront* reached unseen popularity under Hill’s direction, gaining national and foreign press. The Chronicle rated the *Waterfront* in its top 10 restaurants in 1997.

Bruce came on board to consult for the Real Restaurants Group in 2000 and spent two years working at venues such as *Red Herring*, *Fog City Diner*, *Buckeye Road House* and *Betelnut*. Eventually, he found a permanent home as not only the Executive Chef, but also a Partner at BIX, which will be celebrating its 20th anniversary as a Jackson Square institution come this June.

Under his supervision BIX gained not only a brand new, seasonal menu but a 3 star review from Michael Bauer, a top 100 rating in the San Francisco Chronicle and a top 40 rating in the Zagat guide. Bruce’s goal for the cuisine at BIX is simple; cook with the best seasonal ingredients, employ and teach great technique, and design food that is right for a classy and truly unique atmosphere.

In addition to managing the kitchen at BIX, Bruce opened his own restaurants in 2005, *Picco* and *Pizzeria Picco*, located in downtown Larkspur. *Picco* features shared plates using market-driven local ingredients and has become to go-to for locals and city dwellers alike.

A full bar serves seasonal mixed drinks, classic cocktails and award winning wine. Right next door, *Pizzeria Picco & Wine Bar* offers a pristine, straightforward menu serving authentic, wood-fired Neapolitan thin crust pizza, organic salads and West Marin’s organic Straus Dairy soft serve ice cream.

Michael Bauer from the San Francisco Chronicle reports, “*Pizzeria Picco* serves the best pizza in the Bay Area.” The esteemed Mario Batali states in the April 2006 issue of *Gourmet* that Hill’s cuisine is “the best in the country. His Margherita pizza is so good, it’s enough to make you cry.”

Hill was nominated as Chef of the Year by the San Francisco Examiner in 1998 and was *Wine Spectator Magazine*’s Rising Star Chef the same year. Today, Hill has far surpassed the promise inherent in these accolades as all three of his restaurants, *Picco*, *Pizzeria Picco* and BIX are in The Chronicle’s Top 100 Restaurants for 2007.

His roots in California Cuisine remain a major influence in all of his cooking. Over the years he has garnered not only a passion amongst his staff for finding the best ingredients, but a genuine dedication to conservation and sustainability. In the trunk of his car you’ll find his home made

farmers market cart, a 3x1 dolly designed specifically to eliminate the need for plastic bags. All of the electronics, boxes, printer cartridges, batteries, paper and packaging used in his kitchens are returned for reuse or recycled. The food waste at all three restaurants is composted and all of the leftover cooking oil is collected for production of biodiesel. Every single one of the take out boxes at *Picco* are biodegradable.

This year, with all of his ventures underway, Hill departs for what he considers one of his biggest honors, that of Culinary Ambassador to San Francisco's sister city, Osaka, Japan.

