



Alexander's Steakhouse executive chef Richard Archuleta studied at the California School of Culinary Arts in Pasadena.

The 'Steaks' are High

Alexander's brings the flavor

By Julie Carlson

As guests enter Alexander's Steakhouse, tucked in the courtyards and terraced gardens of Plaza Las Fuentes in Pasadena, they'll leave with a one-of-a-kind dining experience.

"We work with local farms and purveyors, sourcing the best meat in the entire world," executive chef Richard Archuleta says. "We also focus heavily on organic and what's in season. That's what guides our menu."

Styled in neutral two-tone, dark woods, glass and leather décor, the restaurant opened its doors in 2015. Alexander's is open for dinner as the indoor restaurant is closed for private parties only under CDC and LA County guidelines.

Alexander's offers an alternative to inside dining. Patrons can dine on the fine dining restaurant's extended patio. A cozy atmosphere is created under the stars and the lights next to dancing flame heaters with lovely views of the historic city hall.

The Japanese-influenced restaurant is a hot spot for wagyu, considered the most luxurious beef in the world. wagyu, which means, "Japanese cow," is the name given to cattle breeds who have been developed over centuries and bloodlines in Japan.

Japan specializes in four main breeds of wagyu — Japanese Shorthorn and Polled only sold in Japan, and Brown and Black. Most are familiar with the name Kobe, a brand of wagyu. To be marketed as Kobe, the Japanese Black cattle must pass inspection, receive a high score, and be raised in the Hyōgo Prefecture in the Kansai region. Japanese cattle are given an alphabetic and numerical grading system, with A5 being the highest-quality rating awarded by the Japanese government.

Wagyu is known for its intense marbling and carries a reputation for umami taste, texture and tenderness that dissolves in the mouth. Alexander's Steakhouse menu has a variety of A5 wagyu selections.

"We have all the best from Japan and from the best farms in Australia for wagyu," Archuleta says. "Sanuki is the rarest beef in the world. It's an olive-fed wagyu. We have Chateau Uenae, Ōita and Miyazaki. And, of course, good USDA prime from greater Omaha, Nebraska, and other places in the Midwest. I never worked at a restaurant that represented so many prefectures of Japan on the menu. We're certified by the Japanese government to serve Kobe beef."

Archuleta, who was born and raised in SoCal, studied at the California School of Culinary Arts in Pasadena. During high school, he worked at a bakery in Rancho Cucamonga, where he became the production manager of the bread. "The owner of the bakery had experience in restaurants. He was the one who encouraged me to look into culinary school."

Archuleta worked in restaurants throughout LA and Pasadena, learning the ropes. In 2010, he moved to Las Vegas and worked for Jean-Georges Steakhouse at ARIA, becoming the executive sous-chef.

"I finally connected with a cuisine at Jean-Georges. Bright, fresh ingredients with a spicy Asian and Latin influences, and steak," Archuleta says.

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Photo by Chris Mortensen



Homochi shots include dashi, avocado, fresas, ponzu, negi and arare. Sold \$5 each or \$30 for six.



Wild Monterey cod is served with matsutake mushroom broth, savory cabbage and miso, priced at \$42.

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He also worked as senior sous-chef at Joël Robuchon, a chef de cuisine at the Waldorf Astoria Beverly Hills, and the executive chef at The LINE LA.

"At Alexander's, my role is overseeing the menu, making sure it stays relevant and fresh," Archuleta explains. "I engage with the guests and train the staff. I like working on the grill. We're the only Alexander's in the company that has a wood grill. We cook everything over oak and binchōtan charcoal."

Used in Japanese cooking, binchōtan is made from Japanese oak. It is odorless and brings out the natural flavors of the food. "You get that unmistakable backyard barbecue smoky flavor on your steak," Archuleta says. "It's also great for grilling vegetables."

All wagyu is hand-cut to order, priced in 3-ounce increments, and served with a tasting of salts. For those who prefer not eating beef, Alexander's offers a wild Monterey cod in a matsutake mushroom broth, half rack of lamb with broccoli de ceccio from the Salinas Valley, or a crunchy organic chicken with yu choy and koji honey mustard.

"For the sides, we keep it more homestyle," Archuleta says. "We have sautéed mushrooms that are cooked with sake and yuzu. It's topped off with King Richard leeks, which we get from a company called Freshly Foraged where we get all our produce."

They have mac and cheese with aged gouda, Parmesan and panko crumbs. Guests can add Maine lobster or black truffles for an additional price. Dinners are not complete without its signature dessert soufflés or pumpkin cheesecake.

Alexander's is an ideal location to celebrate an anniversary, birthday or holiday. For Valentine's Day they are offering a decadent three-course meal for two for \$325 on Tock.

"Given the recent surge of COVID or omicron in LA, I thought it would be a nice offering to have a romantic package for pickup or delivery on Valentine's Day," he says. "It includes a bottle of champagne, our Alexander's breadbasket with honey wagyu truffle butter, beef bourguignon made from the Australian wagyu, accompanied with a truffled poached lobster tail, a truffle salad for starters, and organic beet tartare with vegetable chips. Finish off with a flourless chocolate cake, heart-shaped macarons and chocolate-covered strawberries."

For dining in, Alexander's is serving a Valentine's Day tasting menu that features A5 Kobe beef from the Hyōgo Prefecture. The cost is \$195. For lighter fare, Alexander's is planning to bring back happy hour in mid-February.

"A lot of the locals have been asking for that. The menu is still in the works. It will be some fun bites to enjoy with a glass of wine," he says.

The steakhouse has a strong mixology program, featuring exquisite drinks and a whisky club for restaurant members. After eating at Alexander's, every guest is presented with cotton candy. The flavors also change seasonally.

"Our meat program is second to none," Archuleta says.

"When you dine here at Alexander's, you're going to receive the care and attention of a trained staff and the best product you can get."

Alexander's Steakhouse
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