

Eugenio Villafaña

Culinary Director / Executive Chef

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Culinary leader with over twenty-three years of solid experience in Ultra-Luxury and Wellness Hospitality

- Business-focused approach to managing high-demand, multi-kitchen luxury resorts, combined with an impressive financial acumen and record, while continually maintaining exceptional standards of service and food safety.
- Acquired professional development and academic experience in the USA, Canada, Spain, and England, in addition to eight successful years working on esteemed luxury cruise ships, as well as experience at the three Michelin Star restaurant The Waterside Inn in Brie, England.
- Recognized for "out of this world creations"* encompassing diverse culinary concepts from around the globe, with a particular passion for plant-based cuisine and a commitment to healthy-style cooking, while drawing upon a wealth of experience that spans across various culinary styles and disciplines. *As acknowledged by Sir Richard Branson.
- Engage as a hands-on Chef with a win-win attitude, driven by a deep passion for professional and personal development, fostering growth among both staff and self.
- Possessing a charismatic, warm-hearted, and authentic personality, I create lasting connections with guests, resulting in long-lasting relationships and repeat business.
- Exhibit an innovative and disruptive leadership style, excelling at fostering strong relationships with resort staff, as well as patrons, corporate staff, suppliers, vendors, and the local community, creating a synergy that benefits all.
- Decisive professional with excellent leadership and human development skills, driven by resolute work ethics and uncompromising personal values and the ability to learn and un-learn, whenever the need arises.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

HOTEL AZULIK

[JUN 2022 – JUN 2023]

CULINARY DIRECTOR

- Pioneered innovative culinary concepts, infusing a holistic approach into plant-based and wellness gastronomy, garnering wholehearted appreciation from both guests and owners.
- The introduction of new menus resulted in an impressive 30% increase in guest satisfaction. At Kin Toh Restaurant, the average check rose from \$2,000 mxn to \$3,500 mxn, while at Tseen Ja Restaurant, it elevated from \$1,800 mxn to \$2,800 mxn, all achieved within a remarkable 9-month timeframe.
- Optimization of food costs, from 33% to 22% by implementing strategies to lower food waste, and lower the consumption of single use plastic, without compromising the quality of the foods.
- Spearheaded the complete restructuring and reorganization of the F&B Department, introducing new sets of key performance indicators (KPIs) and comprehensive training programs. The implementation of the highly successful 5x2 program garnered enthusiastic participation and acceptance from employees.
- Unleashed creativity by conceptualizing and developing captivating restaurant and bar concepts for the Tulum location, while also preparing for the future expansion of the company's upcoming properties. Each design was meticulously crafted to evoke a profound emotional connection with patrons, ensuring unforgettable experiences at every visit.

GASTROLUDICA EXPERIENCES**| FEB 2016 - TO DATE****OWNER & CO-OWNER**

- Conceptual gastronomic entrepreneurship with a range of successful concepts in the Riviera Maya such as **Top Table Group** a restaurant management company, **Xquitelicious** esquitería, **Plantiminati** vegan foods retail, **Ya'axche'** Healthy School Canteens, **"Auritum"** Catering for Wellness Retreats, and **"Xolo Taquerias"** in Puerto Rico.

PALMAÏA - THE HOUSE OF AÏA**| MAR 2019 - NOV 2021****EXECUTIVE CHEF**

- Culinary concept creator of the very first luxury plant-based "gifting resort".
- Designed fully plant-based menus in five all-inclusive high-end restaurants and in-suite service.
- Directly involved in pre-opening tasks, working with the architectural department to redesign the kitchens and back of the house according to the new gastronomic concepts.
- Attained and sustained the rating of #1 hotel on Trip Advisor in Playa del Carmen for 1.5 years in a row (despite the pandemic).
- Created and implemented the F&B department SOPs and training programs, resulting in employee satisfaction and a high rate of loyalty, and establishing new industry standards.
- Developed and cultivated the "Think Plant-Based First" philosophy for all hotel staff, which permeated to both employees / employees' families and guests.
- Implementing new strategies to lower the use of plastics: Reduction of 95% of single-use plastics such as plastic film, plastic bags, vacuum bags etc. and, reduction of 60% of multi-use plastic bottles and containers.
- Menus created with 80% of organic produce and organic products, achieved through implementation of new operational procedures and collaborations with local farmers, vendors, and suppliers.

LE BLANC CANCUN SPA & RESORT**| OCT 2016 - APR 2017****EXECUTIVE CHEF / CHEF CONSULTANT**

- Assigned to enhance the already high-end gastronomic experience as Chef Consultant for the most iconic hotel of the company, by creating new menus for the specialty restaurants.
- Assisted co-owners to create a new model of gastronomy in the company, considering allergenics, food restrictions and new culinary trends.
- Surpassed guest satisfaction, leading the hotel to reach and maintain the position of #1 hotel on TripAdvisor in Cancun 6 months in a row, mainly through food experience satisfaction.

BELMOND MAROMA RESORT & SPA RIVIERA MAYA**| APR 2015 - JAN 2016****EXECUTIVE CHEF**

- Optimized the operation of the F&B Department by empowering long-term employees to develop new experience and adapt to new processes and standards of operation.
- Expanded guests' gastronomic experience with trainings by Corporate Chef Raymond Blanc.
- Optimized food cost from 40% to 32% without compromising the quality.
- Created menus for new Banquets Kit, with maximum rates of satisfaction.

HOTEL ROYAL HIDEAWAY PLAYACAR**| OCT 2011 - APR 2015****CULINARY DIRECTOR**

- Successfully transformed the gastronomy through a systematized analysis of the all-inclusive operation.
- Maximized profit margins by effectively managing overall operational costs (lowered food cost from 45% to 28%, overhead costs from 52% to 35% on average (gas, electrical and water), all without compromising quality.
- Successfully managed the concept of The Chef's Table, bringing monthly revenues and from USD \$8,000 to a constant average of USD \$50,000 net, two years in a row (just from food, plus pairings).
- Reached #1 on TripAdvisor best hotels in Playa del Carmen list and sustained it for two years in a row, mainly through unsurpassable food experience satisfaction.
- Conceptualized the menus of all five high-end restaurants, based on local and sustainable ingredients, gaining trust from guests and repeat guests.
- Established and applied the F&B department SOPs and training programs.
- Received on-site trainings by Chef Massimo Bottura, Chef Martin Berasategui and Chef Joan Roca.

HOTEL VILLA LA ESTANCIA, VILLA GROUP**| MAR 2010 - OCT 2011****EXECUTIVE CHEF**

- Successfully transformed the gastronomy through a systematized analysis of its hybrid system (EP and AI).
- Maximized profit margins by effectively managing overall operational F&B costs.
- Redevised the exceptionally popular Cooking Classes program, which sold for \$150 USD per person, reaching an average of 12 classes per week, with an average of 5 persons per class, so increasing the F&B profit margins by 35% in 6 months.
- Host Chef of diverse gastronomic festivals such as The Puerto Vallarta-Riviera Nayarit Wine & Food Festival and Riviera Nayarit Food Tour.

HOTEL VALLARTA PALACE (Hard Rock Vallarta)**| MAY 2008 - MAR 2010****EXECUTIVE CHEF**

- Boosted profit margins by effectively managing overall operational food costs.
- Positively influenced guest satisfaction and, subsequently, reached #1 on TripAdvisor's Best Hotels in Nuevo Vallarta list, then sustained it for one full year, mainly due to culinary satisfaction.
- Conceptualized the menus of all 6 high-end restaurants, based on local and sustainable ingredients.
- Designed the menus for the new Banquets Kit, with top satisfaction.

CELEBRITY CRUISES & AZAMARA CRUISES**| JUN 2006 - APR 2008****CHEF DE CUISINE / TRAVELING CHEF – SPECIALTY RESTAURANTS**

- Following my tenure at Princess Cruises, I was chosen to participate in an exclusive pre-board training program for specialty restaurants at the prestigious three Michelin-starred The Waterside Inn in England, where I received personalized instruction from renowned Chefs Michel & Alain Roux.
- Collaborated across multiple cruise ships, actively involved in the implementation and execution of new menus, while overseeing galley operations onboard.
- Actively participated in the coordination and successful opening of the new sister brand, Azamara.

HOTE MAYAN PALACE MARINA**| APR 2004 – MAY 2006****EXECUTIVE CHEF**

- Commenced my culinary journey as a young Executive Chef for a prestigious hotel in Mexico.
- Successfully introduced innovative menus and strategic initiatives to earn the trust of seasoned employees who initially resisted change.
- Led by example, inspiring them to adapt their culinary styles to embrace the evolving trends of the new culinary era.

PRINCESS CRUISES**| DEC 1999 – JAN 2004****SOUS CHEF**

- Progressed from Assistant Cook to Sous Chef under the guidance of seasoned and influential Chefs, who played a pivotal role in my growth and development as a Chef. Acquired invaluable skills and extensive experience in every section of all restaurants across four distinct cruise ships.

REFERENCES

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