

# N I N E - T E N

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## restaurant and bar

### Biography

#### **JASON KNIBB, Executive Chef**

LA JOLLA, California – Jason Knibb has spent nearly two decades as Executive Chef at La Jolla’s NINE-TEN Restaurant. With so many other chefs racing from kitchen to kitchen, he is an anomaly, crediting the longevity of his position to a combination of “working with good people and being allowed the creative freedom to lead the ship”.

Born in Montego Bay, Jamaica, Jason came to the United States when he was nine years old and grew up in the Los Angeles area. He didn’t attend culinary school, but instead put in his time rising through the ranks and learning his craft in the kitchens of some of the most celebrated chefs in the country. He discovered a love of cooking, almost by accident, when he was a 17 year old busboy at a local restaurant. “The kitchen was short staffed one night,” he remembers. “They asked me to fill in, and suddenly, it all felt really natural and I knew that this was something I could and wanted to do.” The real eye opener came when he had the opportunity to train under Wolfgang Puck at Eureka Restaurant in Los Angeles when he was in his early 20s. “It was just so inspiring to experience the passion the other cooks brought to the process.”

After leaving Eureka, Jason assisted famed Roy Yamaguchi with the opening of Roy's Kahana Bar & Grill in Maui. After returning to Southern California, he accepted the position of Chef Tournant under Hans Rockenwagner at Rockenwagner's in Santa Monica and the popular Rox restaurant in Beverly Hills. Venturing north, Knibb took over as Sous Chef at the San Francisco eatery, Moose's Café. He left San Francisco to oversee the opening of Malibu in Warsaw, Poland, where he trained the restaurant's kitchen staff and created its California Cuisine menus. Jason returned to the U.S. in 1996 to become Sous Chef at Joe's Restaurant in Venice, California. Following a successful two-year endeavor at Joe's, he landed in Sundance, Utah where he worked for La Jolla’s own Trey Foshee at the famed Tree Room, taking over the position of Executive Chef after Trey’s departure. To this day, Jason cites Trey as having the biggest influence on his cooking style.

“Each of my mentors has a simple common philosophy about cooking, which translates into my style today,” he says. “We each create regional cuisine using the freshest, local products available. I find the most culinary pleasure in blending an eclectic mix of classic techniques with modern styles inspired by the ethnic diversities of San Diego. I couple that with my own vision of new American cuisine by taking traditional dishes and giving them a simple, elegant twist.”

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A recognized name in culinary circles across the country and universally acknowledged to be among the top chefs in Southern California for his consistently exquisite food and artistic presentations, Jason has amassed many awards and accolades for his style and cuisine. Most notably: Zagat Survey® Food Score of 25 (*very good to excellent*); a “Best Chef in San Diego” Critic’s Choice Award by *San Diego Magazine*; a “Best Chef in San Diego” Award by the readers of *La Jolla Light*; Gayot’s Top 10 Molecular Restaurants in the U.S.; Zagat’s Top 10 Restaurants in San Diego; and a Rising Star Chef Winner/StarChefs (one of only 2 chefs in San Diego to be recognized for this coveted honor), to name just a few. He has also been featured in *Food & Wine* magazine, *Sunset* magazine and Jamaican Airlines Magazine’s in-flight publication, *Sky Magazine*, and has appeared as a guest chef at the James Beard House, as well as The Food Network's "Cooking Live with Sara Moulton" and a featured chef on Bobby Flay's "Food Nation – Best of Utah" program.

In November of 2011, Jason was a contender on the Food Network’s Iron Chef America, battling Bobby Flay in a seafood/caviar showdown. This showing was the first time a San Diego chef had been invited to compete on Iron Chef, marking yet another significant milestone in his culinary career.

Most recently, Jason was honored by the California Restaurant Association's (CRA) San Diego Chapter as the "San Diego Chef of the Year". The award was presented by San Diego’s Mayor, Kevin Faulconer. Considered San Diego’s most prestigious restaurant honors, the elegant "Gold Medallion Awards" gala attracted over 1,200 industry guests, including our city’s most celebrated restaurateurs, chefs, purveyors, city dignitaries, media and foodies.

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