

# PACIFIC

## THE Kitchen Link

San Diego's top chefs bound by favorite dishes



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# Chain OF Gourmand

Linking chefs together by some of San Diego's best dishes

*By Frank Sabatini Jr.*

Back by popular demand, PACIFIC presents the eighth annual Chain of Gourmand, which showcases a succession of local chefs who call out a favorite dish from a restaurant in San Diego County. The maker behind each of those dishes then names his/her fave, resulting this year in an eight-chef chain (plus a collaborating chef de cuisine) linked by mouthwatering cuisine ranging from upscale to casual.

Kicking off the sequence is Lori Sauer, corporate pastry chef for Blue Bridge Hospitality. The company operates Liberty Public Market in Point Loma, as well as a portfolio of Coronado hot spots such as Leroy's Kitchen + Lounge, Stake Chophouse & Bar, Maretalia Ristorante, West Pac Noodle Bar and the recently launched el Roy's Tequila Bar + Kitchen.

Since taking the position two years ago, Sauer oversees the dessert menus for the group's multiple ventures. She also keeps the display cases stocked with eye-grabbing sweets at Crafted Baked Goods in Liberty Public Market.

Armed with diverse pastry experience from previously working at several notable San Diego restaurants including George's at the Cove, she knows a superior dessert when biting into one. Hence, her love for peaches and cream made by sous chef Keaton Henson at Saiko Sake & Sushi Bar in North Park. The dish, she says, "isn't as simple as it sounds."

Brad Wise's favorite dish:  
**Prime 10-ounce New York steak**

Chef: **Jason Knibb**  
Restaurant: **Nine-Ten**

*"You normally don't see classical dishes cooked to this level of perfection. It came medium-rare as requested, and with vegetables that included sunchokes roasted into candy-like morsels." — Brad Wise*

The bonus to this glistening hunk of beef is shallot-herb butter spiked with lobster stock, which chef Jason Knibb reduces to a near paste. "It gives the dish a surf-and-turf twist," he said. Summer asparagus that appeared in the set will likely give way to squash by wintertime. But the treatment of the flame-grilled steak won't change with its simple seasoning of thyme and cracked black pepper.

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**Jason Knibb**

**Nine-Ten**  
910 Prospect St., La Jolla  
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[nine-ten.com](http://nine-ten.com)





### Jason Knibb's favorite dish: **Tuna crudo**

Chef: **Ryan Johnston**

Restaurant: **Whisknadle**

*"The colors of the tuna, cantaloupe, pickled watermelon rind and cilantro were really beautiful. Served with chili oil and watermelon granita on top, the flavors were fresh and crisp."* — Jason Knibb

Inspired by halibut crudo with cucumber granita (shaved ice) that he ate in Paris, chef Ryan Johnston shared photo of the dish afterwards with Whisknadle's chef de cuisine Natallie Avitia, who came up with the idea to use watermelon instead of cucumber in the granita. The duo utilized the rinds and pickled them for garnish, and chose tuna over halibut as the final tweak. The fish is seasoned with ginger, lime and salt. Available only in summer, Johnston assures it will return by early June.

**Ryan Johnston**

**Whisknadle**

**1044 Wall St., La Jolla**

**858.551.7575**

[whisknadle.com](http://whisknadle.com)