



CAL STAMENOV, Chef
Lucia Restaurant & Bar

Carmel Valley, Calif., - Cooking is the passion and dream that shaped chef Stamenov since childhood. A country man at heart, he grew up on California's Central Coast in a rural area outside of San Francisco. Early on in life, he discovered his talent given his innate love of the land, of good food and the ability to coax flavors with authentic style. After graduation from San Francisco's California Culinary Academy, Stamenov packed his knives and entered the suitcase phase of his life, studying his craft in kitchens around the globe for the next 15 years.

From garde manger to chef du cuisine, Stamenov's built the backbone of his depth and breadth in the kitchen working under such notable culinary talents as Alain Ducasse of the three-star Michelin restaurant, Louis XV at the Hotel de Paris, Monaco; Pierre Gagnaire in St. Etienne, France; Masa Koboishi at Masa's Restaurant in San Francisco; Jean-Louis Palladin at Restaurant Jean-Louis in Washington D.C.; and Michel Richard at Citrus Restaurant.

When an opportunity came to return to Northern California he was ready to return to his roots. In 1999 Stamenov joined Bernardus Lodge and cultivated a culinary team that consistently won accolades. In 2015, the Lodge debuted Lucia Restaurant & Bar, a fresh concept showcasing the culinary creativity of a true artist who has championed the region's bounty for nearly two decades. Blending classical techniques with an eye to sustainability, Stamenov's cuisine reflects the essence of an enviable larder, rendered to a slow and methodical reduction. His focus on purity of ingredients impeccably prepared resonates throughout the restaurant's seasonal menus.

A farmer at heart, Stamenov forages his own backyard – which includes two acres of organic fruits and vegetables, three bee boxes with domestic and wild Italian honey bees, 150+ fruit trees and a cache of 13 Plymouth, Barred Rock, Rhode Island, Speckled Sussex and Ameraucana chickens whose eggs always make a menu debut. The resort's two acre organic garden, flush with esoteric herbs and seasonal vegetables is an added playground for crafting his artisanal creations. Years of friendships with local fisherman, growers and foragers have proven invaluable to both Stamenov and guests of the lodge with daily highlights in the form of fisherman dropping off a catch of Monterey Bay spot prawns or a local forager unexpectedly arriving at the kitchen door with a basket of Big Sur's coveted chanterelle mushrooms. Stamenov embraces the foods he loves most – garden-fresh vegetables and herbs, wood fired meats, hand-crafted olive oils and coaxing out the naturally reduced flavors and essence of each dish.



He resides just a few miles down the road from Bernardus Lodge in Carmel Valley, California with his three daughters in one of the most beautiful and desirable corners of the world.

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