

Featured Chef: Geoff Baumberger

Written by Arizona Foothills Magazine

Featured Chef: Geoff Baumberger of Marcella's Italian Kitchen at Scottsdale Fashion Square.



How did you get your start in the restaurant business?

I knew early on that I wanted to be part of the culinary world, and actually started out as a dishwasher at the age of 16. I attended a vocational high school in Ohio where I focused on culinary arts classes, with my sights on the Culinary Institute of America in New York. I earned my Associate's degree in Culinary Arts from CIA in early 2003. My career was jump-started when I was hired as a permanent line cook at Mitchell's Steakhouse, the same restaurant concept where I completed my culinary externship prior to graduation. My passion and focus have been rewarded as I have worked my way up from line cook to sous chef to opening sous chef. I am currently with my fifth Cameron Mitchell concept and am serving in my third executive chef position— opening Marcella's Italian Kitchen at Scottsdale Fashion Square.

What is your favorite Valley restaurant, besides your own?

I love the ambiance and down-to-earth food at BLT Steak.

What is your favorite dish at your restaurant?

That is a tough one since I really love it ALL. I would say any of our pizzas, our Capellini Al Pomodoro, or our Spaghetti Alla Carbonara.

What is the most memorable meal you've ever had?

Hands down, the most memorable meal I have ever had would be a Thanksgiving Dinner right in the middle of an opening of a restaurant. Everyone was from Columbus, and we were all so busy that no one went home. We all got together and cooked a huge meal. It was an unforgettable Thanksgiving spent with great people. It really defined the holiday for me.

If you could have anyone visit your restaurant, who would it be?

If Johnny Depp or Dave Grohl (Foo Fighters/Nirvana) walked into my restaurant, I would be ecstatic.

Name three ingredients that you have at home at all times.

I would have to say Nueske's Applewood Smoked bacon, any kind of cheese, and avocados.
(Did I mention I have chocolate milk in my fridge 24/7?!)

What is your favorite bottle of wine or cocktail?

Chimney Rock Cabernet

What do you like to do in your free time?

I enjoy spending time in the great outdoors, walking, hiking, riding and playing with my dog, Rudy. When I have time off I can usually be found on the golf course, poolside or snowboarding in the North country. >

[Click here for more information about Marcella's Italian Kitchen.](#)