



## JAMES BEARD NOMINATED CHEF MIKE EASTON JOINS THE KITCHEN AT ABEJA IN WALLA WALLA

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Walla Walla, WA – June 26, 2024 – Renowned chef Mike Easton, a four-time James Beard Award nominee, will join [The Kitchen at Abeja](#) as Executive Chef on July 1.

Chef Easton will bring a Tuscan-inspired influence to The Kitchen at Abeja's prix fixe menu in the heart of Walla Walla wine country. An optional wine pairing menu will showcase how contrasting food and wine flavors, as well as complementary tastes, elevate the dining experience.

Easton is best known for his handmade pasta and high-quality ingredients, which won him cult-like followings at Il Corvo and Il Nido in Seattle and, most recently, at [Bar Bacetto](#) in nearby Waitsburg, Wash. He is celebrated for his meticulous approach to cooking, rooted in traditional techniques that rely on fresh, locally sourced ingredients.

"I am a chef who seeks inspiration from the ingredients around me," says Easton. "Over the coming weeks, I will be tasting Abeja's wines, forming a relationship with them, and writing menus that complement their unique flavors." His new menu will debut on August 1.

The Kitchen at Abeja is located on a picturesque 38-acre historic farmstead that hosts the acclaimed Abeja winery. Also on the property is The Inn at Abeja, managed by Columbia Hospitality. The unique setting offers guests an immersive wine-country experience, blending exceptional cuisine, award-winning wines, and luxurious accommodations amidst the natural beauty of the Walla Walla Valley.

"I fell in love with this property and the wines of Abeja on my first visit here ten years ago," says Easton. The chance to offer wine-centric, fine dining in a pastoral setting like this is an opportunity that comes along once in a lifetime." Easton says he has put Bar Bacetto on "an extended hiatus to seize the opportunity to collaborate with Abeja's incredible team and create exceptional dining experiences."

"Chef Mike's approach to cooking mirrors Abeja's philosophy that every meal should be a celebration of the senses and every visit a memory in the making," says Amy Alvarez-Wampfler, who shares winemaking and general manager duties with her husband, Dan Wampfler. "We are thrilled to welcome him." Easton will replace Chef Jake Crenshaw, who is leaving The Kitchen at Abeja after two years to accept a position as the culinary director at Walla Walla Community College.

### **Hours, Reservations & Location**

Dinner at The Kitchen at Abeja is by reservation only. Reservations may be made online using a link from the [Abeja website](#). The Kitchen at Abeja welcomes all: overnight guests of The Inn at Abeja, visitors to the Walla Walla Valley, and neighbors. Abeja is located at 2014 Mill Creek Road in Walla Walla, Wash. The dining room is open Thursday through Sunday evenings. Seatings are between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m.

## **About Abeja**

Abeja's beautifully restored century-old farmstead provides the perfect setting for world-class hospitality. Surrounded by golden wheat fields and the foothills of the Blue Mountains, Abeja is home to the celebrated Walla Walla winery; The Inn at Abeja provides luxury guest lodging; and The Kitchen at Abeja offers innovative fine dining with an emphasis on food and wine pairings. Estate vineyards, creeks, gardens, lavender fields, and panoramic views provide a serene setting for an immersive wine country experience. For more information about Abeja, please visit [abeja.net](http://abeja.net).

## **About Columbia Hospitality**

Columbia Hospitality (Columbia) is a North American management and consulting company established in 1995 by founder John Oppenheimer. Their growing portfolio includes award-winning hotels and resorts, premier residential communities, restaurants and bars, private and public golf clubs, conference centers, and distinctive venues. Columbia creates exceptional experiences for guests and team members while achieving phenomenal results for property owners. Columbia has also consulted on hundreds of hospitality projects worldwide, delivering a high level of customized service to partners and investors. For more information about Columbia and to view the entire portfolio, visit [columbiahospitality.com](http://columbiahospitality.com).