Burke J. Reeves

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Culinary Director

Accomplished professional with over 30 years of expertise in leading fine dining and high-volume culinary operations.

Renowned for innovative menu planning and development, exceptional restaurant concept advancement, and meticulous labor cost and inventory management. Distinguished for spearheading operational excellence in kitchen operations, F&B planning, catering services, and staff leadership. Expert in integrating advanced culinary skills with operational efficiency, showcased through adept use of cutting-edge culinary technology and systems. Recognized for strategic budget forecasting, P&L management, and implementing rigorous quality control measures. Demonstrates unparalleled leadership in team building, training, and mentoring, fostering a culture of excellence and innovation across all levels of culinary operations. Proven track record in enhancing customer satisfaction and driving new business development through strategic customer relations. Certified ServSafe Instructor & Proctor, embodying a commitment to food safety and sanitation standards.

Core Competencies

- Culinary Leadership & Innovation
- Menu Planning & Development
- Restaurant Administration
- Labor & Inventory Cost Management
- F&B Operations Management
- Staff Management
- Training & Empowerment
- Budget Forecasting
- Profit & Loss Management
- New Business Development
- Fine Dining & Culinary Excellence
- Quality Assurance & Control Skill
- Operational Excellence
- Six Sigma & 5S Methodology
- Vendor Negotiation
- Team Building & Leadership
- Culinary Trend Analysis & Innovation
- Cross-Functional Leadership

Accomplishments

- **Revolutionized Menu Offerings:** Orchestrated a diverse array of catering and residential menus, enhancing customer satisfaction through strategic benchmarking and trend analysis. Successfully launched innovative menu concepts, including Wedding, Seasonal, and Food Truck menus, by integrating guest feedback and samplings to meet evolving tastes and preferences.
- **Advanced Culinary R&D:** Spearheaded the research and development process for menu creation, achieving operational excellence. Led recipe development and vendor negotiations, culminating in enhanced culinary standards and consistent recipe adherence through focused training and effective marketing strategies.
- **Optimized Cost Management:** Designed cost-effective menus for large batch residential dining, maintaining plate costs at $3.00 against a $3.25 budget. Employed vigilant Location Cost Summary analysis to refine menu mix, ensuring cost-effectiveness and seamless back-of-house operations.
- **Innovated Dining Concepts:** Pioneered the introduction of novel dining experiences, including food trucks and restaurant designs, from ideation to implementation. Optimized kitchen layouts / equipment positioning to maximize operational flow and efficiency.
- **Exceeded Labor Cost Goals:** Achieved labor cost containment of 18-22%, surpassing budget targets by 1%. Implemented hands-on leadership, targeted training, and strategic labor productivity initiatives, maintaining exceptional culinary / operational standards.
- **Revamped Inventory Systems:** Revolutionized inventory management with enhanced storeroom organization, product freshness, and waste reduction. Implemented FIFO, and training programs, achieving unparalleled inventory accuracy and quality control.
- **Cultivated Culinary Excellence:** Fostered a culture of culinary excellence, leading by example to set high standards in food quality, presentation, and service. Launched a Chef Development Program to nurture talent, improve customer service skills, and promote continuous operational improvement.

Professional Experience

Duryea's, Montauk, Duryea's Orient Point & Lulu's Sag Harbor, Hamptons, NY **May 2021 to Feb 2024**
Executive Chef, Culinary & Purchasing Director

Orchestrated culinary operations across three premier Alchemy Hospitality restaurants, enhancing kitchen efficiency and upholding safety protocols. Led a proficient team to refine culinary execution, ensuring optimal performance and compliance with health standards. Executed strategic vendor negotiations and procurement processes, optimizing cost without compromising on quality. Instituted a comprehensive sanitation training program, securing ServSafe Instructor and Proctor credentials, reinforcing safety and hygiene practices. Innovated menu design to include allergen considerations and effective portion control, elevating guest dining experience. Engaged in regular budget discussions with the Culinary Development Chef (CDC) and Sous Chef, devising strategies to minimize food and labor costs.

- Rapid ascent from Executive Chef to Culinary Systems Director within five months, reflecting leadership excellence.
- Engineered high-volume culinary strategies, managing daily guest influx of 600-1000, with revenues reaching $130,000, showcasing exceptional capacity in high-pressure environments.
- Championed cost control measures, reducing Food Cost (FC) below 30% across all entities, demonstrating adeptness in financial stewardship and operational efficiency.
- Overhauled recipe management and inventory protocols utilizing Xtra Chef software, significantly enhancing operational workflow and cost management.
- Introduced cutting-edge restaurant management systems, including Dining Alliance, Avero, Toast, and Xtra Chef, to automate and streamline restaurant operations.
- Formulated a leadership development initiative, broadening skill sets among Back of House (BOH) personnel and Junior Sous Chefs.
- Conducted weekly strategic planning sessions, formulating and implementing plans to reduce operational expenses.

The Cliffhouse Restaurant, La Quinta, CA **Jun 2019 – Mar 2021**
Senior Executive Chef

Directed comprehensive training programs, accentuating cross-functional culinary skills, and promoting operational excellence. Created specialized training for culinary students, offering an immersive experience in kitchen production and management, nurturing the next generation of culinary professionals. Implemented robust cost control and waste minimization strategies, including precise menu item costing, inventory management, and vendor negotiations, ensuring operational cost-effectiveness. Fostered a collaborative work atmosphere, uniting Back-of-House (BOH) and Front-of-House (FOH) staff towards common goals, enhancing customer service and dining experience. Initiated a vegan program incorporating innovative ingredients, expanding market appeal and catering to diverse dietary preferences.

- Launched a holistic staff training regime, markedly improving kitchen operational efficiency / enhancing staff skill diversity.
- Reduced labor costs from 9.25-10% to 7.5-8%, reflecting effective workforce management and operational optimizations.
- Surpassed food cost reduction targets, achieving a reduction from 35.5% to 31.25%, by employing stringent cost control and inventory management practices, underscoring financial and operational acumen.
- Spearheaded culinary innovation, integrating contemporary trends and novel menu offerings, securing a competitive position in the culinary landscape.
- Successfully launched a vegan program, significantly enlarging the customer base and establishing the restaurant as a frontrunner in culinary innovation and diversity.

Castaway Restaurant, San Bernardino, CA **Jan 2019 –Jun 2019**
Executive Chef Consultant

Spearheaded the revitalization of brunch, catering, and special events menus, introducing innovative culinary concepts and interactive food stations to elevate guest engagement and satisfaction. Led the design and implementation of unique culinary stations, including a diverse range of offerings from fried rice and udon noodles to bespoke seafood displays, enhancing the overall dining experience. Negotiated effectively with premium suppliers to secure competitive pricing on high-quality ingredients, balancing cost efficiency with superior food standards. Championed sustainability and cost-saving measures by creatively utilizing food scraps for high-demand dishes such as sashimi, poke, and ceviche, setting a benchmark for responsible culinary practices.

- Transformed the brunch experience through the introduction of action stations, significantly increasing attendance from 96 to over 300 guests, marking a remarkable growth in patronage.
- Curated a variety of culinary stations, including a fried rice and udon noodle station and a waffle and French toast action station, markedly enhancing the dining ambiance and guest interaction.
- Introduced a seafood display and hot seafood market station, along with a sashimi presentation, becoming culinary highlights that diversified and enriched the restaurant's menu offerings.
- Successfully negotiated with suppliers to lower ingredient costs while maintaining high standards of food quality, contributing to enhanced profitability and budget optimization.

UC Riverside, Riverside, CA **Nov 2013 – Dec 2018**
Executive Chef

Actively participated in the 'Menus of Change' initiative, promoting healthier, sustainable, and plant-forward diets, aligning with contemporary dietary trends and environmental consciousness. Oversaw the entirety of culinary operations across residential and retail dining, catering, and food truck services, ensuring consistent delivery of high-quality food and customer service. Led a diverse team of culinary professionals, focusing on professional development, productivity enhancement, and instilling a culture of excellence and innovation. Established rigorous sanitation and safety protocols, conducting regular training and meetings to ensure compliance with HACCP guidelines and maintaining a safe dining environment.

- Awarded ACF Gold Medal in both Regional and National NACUFS Culinary Competitions, demonstrating unparalleled culinary skill and creativity.
- Efficiently managed high-volume dining operations, serving over 5000 guests daily across multiple facilities, ensuring exceptional food quality and guest satisfaction.
- Led the strategic menu development for various dining formats, including cycle, seasonal, retail, catering, and specialty diets, significantly broadening and enhancing food offerings.
- Collaborated with the Procurement Analyst to optimize vendor contracts, procurement processes, and inventory management, achieving streamlined operations and cost-effectiveness.
- Implemented comprehensive training and certification programs for kitchen staff, significantly improving operational efficiency, forecasting accuracy, and adherence to safety standards.

CheeseCake Factory, San Diego, CA **Nov 2009 – Oct 2013**
Executive Chef (EKM)

Managed all kitchen operations, including inventory control, food procurement, recipe adherence, and production processes, ensuring a high standard of food quality and guest satisfaction. Directed and mentored a diverse kitchen staff of approximately 68 employees, fostering a positive work environment and encouraging professional growth and excellence in culinary skills. Strategically steered kitchen operations to meet and exceed business goals, adhering to operational plans, managing budgets effectively, and utilizing kitchen systems and tools for optimal performance. Upheld stringent sanitation and food safety standards, consistently achieving high scores in health inspections and maintaining exceptional cleanliness and hygiene practices in all kitchen areas.

- Earned a coveted position in the elite Emerging Leadership Program (ELP), signifying exceptional leadership qualities and potential within The Cheesecake Factory.
- Skillfully oversaw comprehensive kitchen operations, maintaining weekly sales between $290K and $380K, and successfully leading and developing a large team of kitchen staff.
- Maintained exemplary sanitation and food safety standards, evidenced by average health inspection scores of 96% and Everclean scores of 98%, ensuring a safe and hygienic dining environment for guests.
- Fostered a culture of integrity, respect, and responsible behavior, emphasizing dynamic leadership and genuine care for guests, thereby enhancing the overall hospitality experience.

Additional Experience

Executive Sous Chef, Trump National Golf Club Los Angeles, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA
Executive Chef, On Higher Grounds, Los Angeles, CA
Sous Chef / Banquet Chef, Getty Center Museum, Santa Monica, CA
Chef De Partie / Junior Sous Chef, La Cachette, Beverly Hills, CA
Lead Line / Sous Chef, Hotel Traube, Heidelberg, Germany

Education

AS, Associate of Science, – Le Cordon Bleu Culinary Arts Program | California School of Culinary Arts, Pasadena, CA
Studied Italian Cuisine | Apicius International School of Hospitality, Florence, Italy

Professional Certifications

ServSafe Certification – Exp. 2/2027
Certified ServSafe Instructor & Registered ServSafe Proctor
HACCP Certification – No Expiration

Awards & Recognition

ACF Gold Medal, NACUFS Region Culinary Competition, Salt Lake, 2018
ACF Gold Medal, NACUFS National Culinary Competition, Rhode Island 2018

Technical Proficiencies

MICROS, Food Pro, Xtra Chef, POS, Dining Alliance