

JustLuxe

## Award-Winning Culinary Master Chef William Bradley On Changing How People Perceive Cuisine

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*Photos Courtesy of The Grand Del Mar*

At only 39, William Bradley is the Executive Chef/Director of the award-winning [Addison](#) at The Grand Del Mar. The San Diego native started cooking in his teens at a quaint Italian restaurant in Bonita, a small town north of San Diego. He then trained under Chef James Boyce at Azzura Point at Loews Coronado Bay Resort, then moved to Arizona where he was the sous-chef at The Phoenician Resort's elite restaurant, Mary Elaine's, before finally becoming executive chef at the Hyatt Regency Scottsdale.

Chef Bradley has been honored multiple times: he was selected to be a Council Member with the Bocuse d'Or USA Foundation in 2013; a 2012 James Beard Foundation Award semifinalist; Relais & Châteaux Grand Chef, 2010; *StarChefs.com*'s 2010 "Los Angeles-San Diego Rising Stars" winner; and was chosen as the "Rising Star Chef of 2006" by *Arizona Republic*.



For the sixth year in a row, [Addison at The Grand Del Mar](#) earned both the Forbes Five-Star Award and the AAA Five-Diamond Award—the *only* restaurant in San Diego County to do so. It was named one of the Top 40 Restaurants in the U.S. by *Gayot*, and again, it was the only one in San Diego County to achieve this distinction. Most recently, Addison won a 2014 Restaurant award from *Wine Spectator*, and Chef Bradley won the appellation of the “World’s Next Super-Chef” as 2014 winner of the *Robb Report’s* Culinary Masters Competition. The last honor was won by Chef Bradley after he was put up against five of America’s up-and-coming haute cuisine chefs in a series of five-course dinners. He was handpicked by culinary icon [Thomas Keller](#), proprietor of Napa Valley’s The French Laundry and New York’s Per Se.

Chef Bradley typically works 12-hour days, overseeing a 15-member kitchen crew at Addison, which serves four-, seven- and 10-course meals. In a previous interview, Chef Bradley told us that he tastes every sauce and glaze while it’s being prepared and is the last set of critical eyes surveying the dish before it goes out to Addison’s 18-table dining room.



We recently spoke with Chef Bradley a second time and asked him about taste memory, how he sees food trends, authenticity, sourcing, and the scalable soul of great cuisine.

**JustLuxe:** Since we last spoke, you have opened a new restaurant, **Bijou in La Jolla**. What is this restaurant all about and why did you decide to open it?

**William Bradley:** The space was there and the restaurant [that was] there before didn't work out. I was asked to come in and take the restaurant in a different direction. I thought it should be a place where the guest could receive classic bistro fare with great French soul, a great wine bar. Our Sous-Chef at Addison, Shaun Gethin, went to La Jolla to help open and cook for Bijou. And with Chef Shaun at the helm, it is doing very well.



**JL:** Can you speak a little about Addison's exceptional success? When we interviewed you last, you had a unique, innovative menu that reflected your food philosophies. How has the menu changed in the past years? How much food authenticity and farm-to-table sourcing can or do you do?

**WB:** We live in one of those parts of the world where great fruits and vegetables are grown nearly all the time—examples: Chino Farms White Corn from a few miles inland in Rancho Santa Fe, and Strawberry figs. So our menus are full of food authenticity, meaning we can get great vegetables and fruit fresh daily. We do the same for meats and fish.

**JL: Do you have seasonal menus?**

**WB:** We have seasonal menus and often for a much longer time, because our warm seasons are longer than others. We have Indian Summers, where our heirloom tomatoes last until November. Our menus change when the seasons change. Our vegetables let us know!



**JL: When we interviewed you before, we noticed that you had a strong sense of oneness with the food you prepare, which allows for a greater perfection in presentation and in taste. Both have to do with taste memory—something that great chefs have and most others just do not. How does this taste memory work in creating great tastes and great preparations?**

**WB:** Having taste memory is essential to the creation of great cuisine. You have to see a recipe and before you go to the kitchen, know what it will taste like. This has much to do with understanding the soul of taste also. If you have great taste memory, you will make cooking look easy. Which is a great thing but can be a challenge also

**JL: Why?**

**WB:** Because great chefs make their work look easy. Young chefs often say, “I can do that!” What young chefs can’t know yet is it takes years of trial and error to make anything look easy. And a major focus of great cuisine is restraint. In mastering your craft you must learn simplicity, not excess, and with the option of simplicity, you can allow flavors to emerge naturally, and [with] that, you learn restraint.



**JL: From a personal perspective, what has been the most unusual food you have eaten?**

**WB:** Mako shark. I liked it, but I would not put it on the Addison menu!

**JL: On a similar theme, is there any fruit or vegetable that you would like to have more of that, even in Southern California, is relatively rare?**

**WB:** Yes! White asparagus. We can get it, but not all the time. And it has a similar sense of simple perfection as a white truffle. In both of those products, there is purity, beauty, and simplicity—of the look, and taste. We are always searching for that threesome.

**JL: Have you seen an evolution in the taste of those who come to Addison in the past years? Do they request unusual things? More vegan? Vegetarian?**

**WB:** There are many vegetarians and vegans who come here, and we can provide for them. However, many now who come to Addison request gluten-free menus, and we are ready for them also. We have gluten-free breads and other items on the menu.



**JL: How do you see food trends and high-end cuisine? Can they live together?**

**WB:** My philosophy on haute cuisine has never changed. We don't follow trends, because they have a beginning and an end. I believe in sourcing the best product that you can get and maximizing the flavors of each ingredient.

**JL: Where do you see yourself in a few years? Can you see yourself opening more restaurants, or is Addison enough?**

**WB:** I have been cooking for a living since I was 16-years-old. I am now 39. One of the things you have to remember is how physical a chef's life is. You are always on your feet, always tasting, doing many things at once, and 12-13 hours minimum a day. So you must be physically fit and start that way. With that said, I do love San Diego—and where I live, I am not far from the ocean; I can swim and work out. So I am staying here—I like to think our work and our awards is changing how San Diego cuisine is perceived.



