



Local chef outduels top-shelf competition

Addison's William Bradley wins Robb Report's 2014 Culinary Masters Competition

By [Pam Kragen](#) JAN. 8, 2014



Addison chef William Bradley in his Carmel Valley kitchen. — *Charlie Neuman*

CARMEL VALLEY — William Bradley never went to culinary school and he cringes at the mere mention of celebrity chefs, but today the homegrown cooking star at Addison Restaurant was proclaimed the “World’s Next Super-Chef” as 2014 winner of the Robb Report’s Culinary Masters Competition.

The luxury magazine — a guidebook for the nation’s elite — named the 38-year-old San Diego native the victor of its second annual contest, which pitted five of America’s up-and-coming haute cuisine chefs in a series of five-course dinners last summer and fall in California and New York City.

Each competitor was nominated by one of the country’s most esteemed chefs. Bradley was hand-picked by culinary icon Thomas Keller, proprietor of Napa Valley’s The French Laundry and Per Se. In the magazine’s January cover story, Keller said he discovered Bradley’s cooking — a swoon-worthy sliver of crispy sea bass — in 2010 while staying at the Grand Del Mar Resort, where Addison is based.

“William’s food is focused and he refines simplicity to the utmost degree,” Keller said. “He represents the future of the profession.”

Keller called Bradley early last year with an invitation to compete in the topflight culinary event, with one caveat.

“Thomas said ‘It will be great, but we have to win,’” Bradley recalled. “I liked the pressure. I’m competitive and his challenge inspired and drove me to really take this seriously and try to win it.”

Bradley faced off against Iron Chef Masaharu Morimoto's nominee Yoshinori Ishii, cookbook author Nancy Silverton's pick Justin Smillie; French-born restaurateur Jean-Georges Vongerichten's pick Alex Stupak; as well as Frenchman Daniel Boulud's nominee George Mendes.

Each chef had several months to prepare their menu, then serve it to 60 distinguished Robb Report editors and readers. Bradley's dinner took place Aug. 10 at the Fairmont Miramar Hotel in Santa Monica.

The Carmel Valley resident typically works 12-hour days, overseeing a 15-member kitchen crew at Addison, which serves four-, seven- and 10-course meals that range from \$98 to \$235. Bradley said he's a detail person who tastes every sauce and glaze while it's being prepared and is the last set of eyeballs on each dish before it goes out to the 18-table dining room.

One of the competitors in Robb Report's first Culinary Masters Competition, chef Gavin Kaysen of Cafe Boulud in New York City, said Bradley's award is an important one in culinary circles. Kaysen and Bradley have known each other since 2006, when Kaysen was chef de cuisine at the former El Bizcocho at the Rancho Bernardo Inn. Kaysen went on to represent the U.S. in the international Bocuse d'Or competition in 2007 and was named the James Beard Foundation's Rising Star Chef of 2008.

"William is not only an incredible chef, but he is a masterful technician, which I am sure is why he won," Kaysen said. "I also know that chef Thomas Keller would not choose just anybody, but would choose someone who personifies himself as a true professional. William and I have been good friends for about eight years now, it has been rewarding to watch his light become brighter and even more rewarding to see how dedicated he is to fine dining, and teaching the next generation of great chefs in San Diego. I couldn't be happier for him and San Diego to share in this award."

Since Addison opened in 2006, Bradley has followed a singular path with no-nonsense, precisely prepared food that showcases the flavors of the ingredients and not trendy techniques.

"My philosophy on haute cuisine has never changed," Bradley said. "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 delicious flavors of each ingredient."

He described his winning menu as a progression of flavors and experiences that highlighted seasonal California produce and Pacific seafood. But the course that made Keller a wee bit nervous was the crispy veal sweetbreads.

"I sent him the menu about a month ahead and he asked about the sweetbreads. I told him that this is one of our signature dishes at Addison and he said that if I feel confident about it, to go for it," Bradley said.

Bradley said he hopes his win will help build the city's fortunes as an emerging culinary capital.

“To be noticed here in little San Diego and compete against other chefs from New York, it’s great for this city,” he said. “It helps secure San Diego as a place that needs to be taken seriously when it comes to cuisine.”

Although interviews and television appearances are sure to follow today’s announcement, the soft-spoken Bradley said he has no intention of becoming the next Food Network star. Although he would like to write an Addison cookbook, his immediate goals are simple. As for today?

“I’ll be in the restaurant, doing what I do every night, trying to produce an experience for all our diners,” he said.

William Bradley

Executive chef/manager, Addison at the Grand Del Mar

Age: 38

Home: Carmel Valley

Bio: The San Diego native started cooking in his teens at a small Italian restaurant in Bonita. He trained under chef James Boyce at Azzura Point at Loews Coronado Bay Resort, then moved to Arizona where he was sous chef at The Phoenician resort’s Mary Elaine’s and executive chef at Hyatt Regency Scottsdale.

Honors: Council Member, Bocuse d’Or USA 2013. Semifinalist, 2012 James Beard Foundation Award. Relais & Châteaux Grand Chef, 2010. StarChefs.com’s 2010 “Los Angeles-San Diego Rising Stars” winner. “Rising Star Chef of 2006” by Arizona Republic.



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LOCAL CHEF OUTDUELS TOP-SHELF COMPETITION IN CULINARY CONTEST

PAM KRAGEN • U-T

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Chef William Bradley of Addison restaurant

CHEF • Bradley hopes his win will help build S.D.'s fortunes as emerging culinary capital

FROM A1

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Chef William Bradley (left) was nominated for the Robb Report's Culinary Masters Competition by culinary icon Thomas Keller. COURTESY PHOTO

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(U-T San Diego Publisher Douglas F. Manchester is owner of The Grand Del Mar.)

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