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STAR CHEFS

By Carole Dixon 03/16/10 at 12:07PM

Chef Ray Garcia receives Rising Star Award



Chef Ray Garcia of FIG StarChefs.com

Within one year since [FIG restaurant's](#) opening last February, Chef Ray Garcia has been recognized as a [Rising Star by the editorial team at StarChefs.com](#) for his contribution to sustainable culinary practices. We spoke to the Chef about what this means for him moving forward.

"At FIG my culinary philosophy is to really showcase the ingredient rather than just the technique. Since the beginning I have searched for ways to best accentuate and build upon the great flavors that nature has already created. Working with local farmers I am in constant search of ingredients and flavors that are new and exciting to myself and most of our guests."

Not only is Chef Ray scouring the [Santa Monica Farmers' Market](#) for his seasonal produce, but FIG also employs a food forager, Kerry Clasby, who travels California's Western Seaboard gathering the best produce directly from local farms. Ray lists vegetables and fruits at the bottom of his menu as 'just arrived,' 'in peak season,' and 'coming soon.' FIG's commitment to sustainability extends to local organic beef and poultry as well as seafood that is endorsed by [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#). Under Ray's guidance, FIG filters water, recycles and composts, and the restaurant fryer oil is transformed into hand soap. FIG is the first restaurant in Santa Monica to offer a valet for cyclists, so locals can peddle rather than drive.

According to Chef Ray, "The acknowledgment of our sustainable practices is a testament to the fact that people are caring more about where their food is coming from as well the impact that they have on the land that is providing for us all."

Chef Ray, is an LA native and honed his skills working with [Douglas Keene at Cyrus](#) and [Thomas Keller at the French Laundry](#). Rising Star Awards are known to culinary insiders for their recognition of up-and-coming chefs, pastry chefs, sommeliers and mixologists from around the country. The awards walk-around tasting gala will be hosted at [Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows](#) on Thursday, March 18, 2010 from 7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. where FIG Restaurant is located