

Good Grapes: The Accidental Vintners of the Valley p.54

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PRO FILES

Taste of the Valley

Food is indisputably one of the greatest pleasures in life. And these days you don't have to go far or work hard to discover delicious eats. Some of LA's most exciting chefs and restaurateurs are now part of our landscape. From cutting-edge culinary wizards to forward-thinking entrepreneurs, meet the people behind the Valley's hottest eateries, catering businesses and delivery services.

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FAST FACT

Chef Chris grew up in a family of food lovers—his father is from Sicily, and his mother is from the South.

CHRIS TURANO

Executive Chef
The Front Yard

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The Front Yard at The Garland offers guests an authentic Southern California dining experience with executive chef Chris Turano's thoughtfully crafted menu. Upscale décor, an expansive outdoor patio with fireplace, a bar serving "modern classic" cocktails and a lively ambience combine to create an atmosphere of dining at a close friend's home. Owner James Crank recently managed an extensive renovation of the restaurant interior, which is inspired by a 1970s bohemian vibe made modern for today's foodie.

Tell us about your philosophy on food.

"The one common theme in great food is starting with quality ingredients. There are many people who say that cooking is an art

form. I believe that there are few chefs in the world who are artists, but most of us are craftsmen. The job of a chef is to take something that starts off wonderful and show that ingredient off, not show off what that chef can do. Sometimes you need to take something off the plate, not add to it."

What is your favorite thing about working with food?

"I love working with ingredients that are as close to perfect as possible. That's why I've joked saying that I am a greedy chef. I am always looking for the best ingredients I can get my hands on. Luckily, here in California I get to be a kid in a candy store, versus when I was cooking in Chicago. Being able to highlight something that only one other human

has touched is an amazingly special thing. When you start with really good ingredients and focus on elevating them, you are on a solid path to really good food."

What do you love to work with in the kitchen?

"We make our own bread, pasta, butter, so our secret is making it ourselves because it just tastes better. One of the first things I did when I came on was look for a great spice shop to partner with. Spice Station in Studio City supplies our spices, and they source really high quality ingredients that make a big impact—even if it is just a dash at a time. We have a couple of toys in the kitchen: a dehydrator and a smoker that is going almost all the time (we smoke pork shoulder for 24 hours at a time)."