



CHEF XAVIER PÉREZ STONE

Starting at a very young age, there were key moments and people that influenced Xavi Pérez' decision to become a chef. First there was his father, a cook by hobby and a hunter by passion, who helped him lose his fear of blood and taught him to respect the prey. His grandmothers strolled through the markets with him, choosing the vegetables and fish to prepare for lunch.

He worked in a chicken shop, distributing and filling orders. He is a graduate of the Panamerican School of Hospitality, where he met the director of the university, who sent him to do a small 'stage' at restaurant La Barandilla owned by Bruno Oteiza.

From there he jumped to Tezca and was invited to support Juan Mari Arzak, recipient of three Michelin Stars, during his second visit to Mexico. He traveled to the home of Juan Mari in San Sebastian, Spain and worked in his laboratory with Xabier Gutierrez. He then returned for the inauguration of Tezca Pedregal as Head Chef and later became the Executive Sous Chef of the Royal Pedregal Hotel. Then came the opportunity to go

further; to lead Alaia, the restaurant that sparked his restlessness for innovation.

During the course of his career, he has also worked in Mathias Dahlgren's Bon Lloc in Stockholm, at Aguila y Sol with Martha Ortiz; he was a Private Chef at the Spanish Embassy in Mexico, and Executive Chef of the Major Hacienda Official at the National Palace. He later joined Biko and resumed his friendship with Mikel Alonso and Bruno Oteiza, who guided him at Cocina de Autor restaurant at Grand Velas Riviera Maya resort.

In recent years, Cocina de Autor has established an honest and free form of culinary art that offers its very best to promote the culinary heritage of our country; it develops creative cuisine in constant evolution, where the flavors used in daily Mexican cuisine fuse with the latest culinary techniques.

The restaurant has been listed among the "100 Best New Food and Drink Experiences in the World" by Food & Wine Magazine and #35 of New York Magazine. It was #8 on the Gourmand list of "The 50 Best Restaurants in Mexico by BBVA Bancomer"; it also was one of the "Best 23 Restaurants in Mexico" by Travel and Leisure in 2011. In 2013, it became the world's first All Inclusive Resort Restaurant to receive the AAA Five Diamond Award.

In perpetual evolution, Cocina de Autor's cuisine is now led by Nahúm Velasco, guided by Xavi Pérez. Individually, Xavi Pérez himself has taken first place in Mexico's Chef of the Year 2011-2012 and won the Iron Chef Canada competition in 2014.