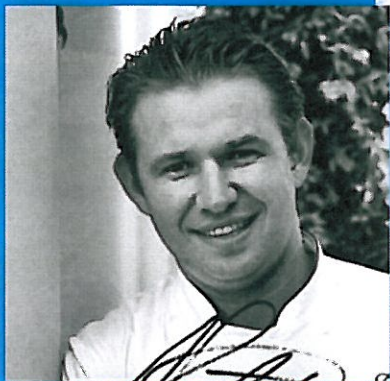


Do you want to know...

- » Las Vegas Revue Home
- » Gala Tasting Menu
- » Buy Gala Tickets
- » Sign up for JobFinder Career Fair
- » Behind-The-Scenes Photos
- » Other Revues
- » About Rising Stars



Jacques Van Staden

ALIZÉ | Las Vegas

Biography

Thirty-four-year-old Jacques Van Staden was born in Pretoria, South Africa, where his passion for cooking was awakened while assisting his Italian grandmother in the kitchen at age seven. By the time he was eleven, he was cooking the family's big Sunday meals and knew he wanted to be a chef. At 14, Van Staden was learning the craft at a local French restaurant while his father thought he was out playing rugby. After graduating high school, he sold his car to afford airfare to America, where being a chef was considered a more acceptable career goal. In 1990 he arrived in Washington, D.C. and took a job cooking at the South African Embassy while attending L'Academie de Cuisine in suburban Maryland.

Van Staden's first job as a professionally trained chef was at the historic *Occidental Grill*, a power-dining venue just around the corner from the White House (Washingtonians refer to it as "the second most famous address on Pennsylvania Avenue"). Next he moved on to *Jean-Louis*, the restaurant of the late chef Jean-Louis Palladin, a rarefied venue in the famous Watergate Hotel, where he would quickly advance to Sous Chef under one of America's most revered toques. Beyond serving as a mentor, the gregarious Palladin would become Van Staden's greatest inspiration in the culinary world. He next worked as Executive Sous Chef under another master, when in 1995 Gray Kunz opened a Washington, D.C. branch of his renowned New York restaurant, *Lespinasse*. At this bastion of haute French cuisine, Van Staden continued to refine the classical techniques he developed at the Watergate.

In 1996, Van Staden was tapped by yet another one of D.C.'s most influential restaurants, *Citronelle*, where chef/owner Michel Richard, one of the leaders of the California-French movement, appointed him Executive Chef. This distinguished Georgetown restaurant offered the young chef an exciting opportunity to incorporate contemporary influences into traditional French cuisine. Yearning, however, to own his own restaurant, Van Staden opened a casual Mediterranean establishment called *Café Olé*, specializing in tapas, and subsequently returned to the Watergate as Executive Chef for the entire hotel, managing 250 employees and a \$10 million food and beverage budget.

When the Aladdin Hotel lured him to Las Vegas in 2000 to work as Executive Chef at its high-end *London Club*, he was in a position to be noticed by André Rochat, who persuaded him to come work as Chef de Cuisine at *Alizé* at the Top of the Palms in 2003. That fateful decision to sell his car in Pretoria to buy airfare to America turned out to be a wise move for the youthful Van Staden, who has already been nominated for a "Rising Star Chef of the Year" award from the James Beard Foundation.

share



Where
it comes
from
matters.™



Jacques Van Staden

ALIZÉ
Top of the Palms Casino Resort
4321 W. Flamingo Road
Las Vegas, NV 89103
(702) 951-7000

Recipe & Interview »

hollinks



findajob

Great Chef de Partie Opportunity in Chicago



quickmeals

Boar Burger with Steak Fries and Malt Vinegar Aioli from Duskie Estes and John Stewart of Bovolo - Healdsburg, CA



events

Join us in celebrating the 2010 New York Rising Stars at the Gala and Awards Ceremony on September 22, 2010 at Maritime Parc



cookbooks

James Villas
Pig: King of the Southern Table
April 2010
Wiley & Sons