

Darren Norris

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**EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE:****Owner / Culinary & Beverage Director, Shibuya Eatery, Death Punch Bar (sold business)**

2019 - current, Washington DC / Chevy Chase, MD

- Founded and launched two full-service restaurants and bar/music venue from concept to opening, overseeing site selection, branding, menu development, and operations. Sold bar in October 2025.
- Founded and launched a fast casual restaurant Shibuya Eatery 2.0, from concept to opening, overseeing site selection, branding, menu development, and operations
- Managed day-to-day operations including staffing, scheduling, inventory, purchasing and vendor negotiations
- Built and led a team of 30 employees; hired, trained, and supervised staff
- Developed budgets, pricing strategy, and cost controls to maintain profitability
- Implemented customer service standards resulting in strong repeat business
- *Only Maryland restaurant featured in Eater DC's Best New Restaurant List (October 2025).*
- *Washingtonian Magazine's 25 Best New Restaurants of 2021; Featured in Washington Post, Spring Dining Guide 2021. 25 Most Exciting New Restaurants, Eater DC 2020*

Owner / Culinary & Beverage Director, Black Whiskey, Washington, DC 05/2013 – Present

- Founded, developed and launched concept and design
- Managed day-to-day operations including staffing, scheduling, inventory, purchasing and vendor negotiations
- Developed budgets, pricing strategy, and cost controls to maintain profitability
- Cost out menus and oversee P&L's and operating costs

Owner & Culinary Director, Maki Shop, Washington, DC 04/2015 – 2017

- Created and launched a restaurant startup, developing the business model, brand identity, and operational infrastructure
- Secured financing, managed budgets, and controlled cash flow
- Oversaw marketing strategy, social media presence, and local partnerships
- Built operational workflows that supported growth and consistency

Director of Culinary Operations / Executive Chef, Main Event Caterers, Arlington, VA 10/15 – 10/16

- Redesigned all new menus for a \$11.5M full-scale catering operation and worked with sales team to create customized menus for clients
- Improved tasting closing ratio from 55% to 90% after assuming the role.
- Supervised a culinary team of 50 with 10% labor
- Attended and supervised numerous catering events at various venues in the DMV
- Created and implemented SOP's for distribution, purchasing, receiving, sanitation, safety
- Improved food costs to 25%
- Developed HAACP plans for all aspects of culinary operations

Owner / Executive Chef, Kushi Izakaya & Sushi, Washington, DC 03/2010 – 09/2014

- 2010 JAMES BEARD SEMI FINALIST, BEST NEW RESTAURANT IN AMERICA
- 2011 RESTAURATEUR OF THE YEAR - WASHINGTONIAN AWARDS
- Pioneered restaurant concept, all menus, interior & kitchen design with architectural team, coordinated construction, buildout, and oversaw all general opening procedures for first izakaya concept in DC market
- Recruited, interviewed, hired, and trained staff of 40+

Executive Chef, Ridgewells Caterers, Bethesda, MD 10/2005 – 02/2009

- Responsible for operations and execution of the largest and highest grossing fine catering company in the Washington, DC metropolitan area
- Annual sales exceeding \$42 million
- Managing a staff of 60 full time kitchen employees, plus managing event staff of 200+
- Maintaining an annual food cost average of 23.5% and labor at 14%
- Created all current menus in use as well as customizing menus for clients' needs
- Styling of all food concepts for print ad/marketing campaigns, food photos published in numerous publications locally and nationally

Culinary Consultant, Creative Cuisine Catering, Boca Raton, FL 06/2005 – 09/2005

- Responsible for the operation and execution of a high-end catering company with annual sales exceeding \$4.5M
- Menu creation and development specializing in customized menus for each client
- Including recipes, detailed menu costing, taste consistency
- Prepared capital and operational budgets for entire operation
- Strict adherence to sanitation guidelines in accordance with Florida State Health Department

Chef de Cuisine, Scalini Fedeli, New York, NY 03/2004 – 06/2005

- Responsible for execution of a nine course prix fixe menu for high profile Tribeca Italian restaurant
- Annual sales approximately \$4.5 Million with a dining capacity of 85

Creative Director / Executive Chef, Jeffrey Chodorow Restaurant Group / Ian Schrager Company / China Grill, CBS Building 6th Ave & 53rd Street New York, NY 01/2003 – 02/2004

- Responsible for operation and execution of high-profile flagship restaurant with annual sales approximately \$14 million in Midtown Manhattan
- Responsible for creating the Menu in conjunction with fellow China Grill Chef's from Miami, Las Vegas, and Mexico City
- Managed 50+ kitchen employees of a full-service restaurant
- Menu development including recipes, detailed costing, taste consistency
- Assisted in budget development and managed all phases of financials, P/L, labor reports, food cost
- Successfully lowered food cost by 8% and raised profit margin across the board
- Prepared capital and operational budgets for the kitchen
- Implemented policy and procedures
- Strict adherence to sanitation guidelines in accordance with New York State Health Department

Executive Chef, Perry's Restaurant, Washington, DC 2000 – 2002

- Directed culinary operations for high-volume restaurant(s), ensuring consistency, quality, and profitability

Executive Chef, Embassy of Greece, Washington, DC 1998 – 2000

Executive Sous Chef, Knightsbridge Restaurant Group, Oval Room, Washington, DC 1996– 1998

- Hands on director of culinary operations for award winning restaurateur Ashok Bajaj with unit annual sales exceeding \$7M.

Executive Sous Chef, National Press Club, Multi-Unit Food and Beverage Operation, Washington, DC, 1994 – 1996

Executive Sous Chef, Red Sage, Washington, DC 1993 – 1994

- Led culinary operations for a Mark Miller Restaurant with annual sales exceeding \$12M.

Executive Chef, Hotel Washington, Washington, DC 1990 – 1993

- Led culinary operations for a multi-unit restaurant portfolio within a full-service hotel, overseeing menu development, execution, and quality standards across all outlets
- Directed and mentored a culinary team of 60 chefs and kitchen staff across multiple concepts
- Developed seasonal menus, standardized recipes, and plating guidelines to ensure consistency and brand alignment
- Managed food costs, labor budgets, and inventory controls, achieving 15% cost reduction / maintaining target margins
- Collaborated with hotel leadership and F&B management to align culinary strategy with guest experience and revenue goals
- Ensured compliance with health, safety, and sanitation regulations

Sous Chef, TPC Club at Eagle Trace, Coral Springs, FL 1988 – 1990

EDUCATION:

Southern California Institute of the Arts, Laguna Beach, CA, 1988

California Culinary Institute, Santa Monica, CA, 1988

University of South Florida, Tampa, Fl, 1985