



THE
JOEL PALMER
HOUSE

MEDIA KIT

Joel Palmer House is Oregon fine dining at its best – a historic, hospitable, and uniquely delicious taste of place in the heart of Willamette Valley.

Chef Owner Christopher Czarnecki and Director of Hospitality Levi Seed blend tradition and innovation in a dining experience infused with the generosity of true hospitality. Forest-to-table wild mushroom dishes and an unmatched collection of Willamette Valley Pinot Noir make this family-owned establishment a beacon for seekers of authentic Pacific Northwest cuisine.

FAST FACTS

- **4th Generation Chef & Owner Christopher Czarnecki**
 - Restaurant family specializing in **local wild mushrooms since 1916**
 - U.S. Army Combat Veteran (Iraq)
 - **BIPOC, Generation Z Director of Hospitality & Lead Sommelier Levi Seed**
 - Trained chef and certified sommelier
 - Survivor of childhood leukemia turned fundraising activist
 - Set in **Historic 1857 Building** in the Heart of Willamette Valley
 - Prior home of Dayton co-founder and Oregon pioneer Joel Palmer
 - Preserved on Oregon Register and National Register of Historic Places
 - **World's Best Willamette Valley Wine List**
 - More than 2,000 bottles of > 600 different wines, 96% from Oregon
 - Exclusive verticals of Adelsheim Quarter Mile, Archery Summit Arcus, etc.
 - Library vintages stretch back to 1990s
 - **No-Tipping Policy since 1960s**
 - 20% service charge helps fund full medical, dental, 401(k) match
 - Seasonally Changing **Prix-Fixe Menus** Include: **Oregon Omakase, Tête de Cuvée, Mushroom Madness, Mushroom Sunshine** (*weeknights, Jan-May only*)
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THE STORY

The Czarnecki family has welcomed wild mushroom lovers to their restaurants for over 100 years. Four generations, two states, and one James Beard Award later, Christopher Czarnecki now guides the Joel Palmer House in a new chapter that celebrates both local and global inspiration. From the respectful, modernizing renovations of the historic 1857 home the restaurant occupies, to the creative evolution of the menu and all-Willamette Valley wine list, Chef Czarnecki and his Director of Hospitality Levi Seed have ushered in an exciting new era for contemporary Oregon fine dining.



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THE PHILOSOPHY

*“You live your values or you don’t. You take your values to work, you take them home, you live your values while you’re choosing which movie to watch with your kids.
Short-term gains are not worth the long-term costs.”*

- Chef Christopher Czarnecki

Authenticity and integrity are paramount at the Joel Palmer House. From the EV chargers and culinary garden in front, to the no-tipping policy and respectful work environment behind the scenes, this is a restaurant that lives its values. A flat 20% service charge supports 100% employer-paid medical and dental benefits for full-time staff and a 401(k) match for all.

Joel Palmer House spotlights the diversity and depth of its vintner neighbors with a well-curated wine list focused almost exclusively on Willamette Valley Pinot Noir. Culinary ingredients are also sourced from responsible regional purveyors and producers, including duck from Maple Leaf Farms, Oregon beef from Painted Hills Farms, wild foods from local foragers, fresh oysters from the cold waters of the Pacific Northwest, and responsibly farmed caviar and sturgeon from Sterling Caviar.

Chef Czarnecki believes in sourcing only the best for his guests, who are invited to relax and be themselves, eating according to their hunger levels with omakase-style menus designed to leave them feeling utterly pampered, sated, and content.

“Our no tipping policy goes back to the 1960s, when my grandparents were running things. They switched it to the European model where everybody in the kitchen, everybody in the front of the house is a service professional, and they deserve to be compensated accordingly. Being a server is not just something you do on your way to something else. Being a cook isn't something you just put up with because you can't find something else to do. And by having an environment where everybody wants to work here, is fairly and properly compensated at a livable rate with benefits and weekends off and holidays off, it creates a positive work environment where people want to come to work.”

- Chef Christopher Czarnecki



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THE WINE PROGRAM

“There is a reason why the Joel Palmer House has one of the best selections of Oregon Pinot Noir in the country. They have cultivated relationships with local wineries, and therefore get the good stuff...”

- Alex Sokol Blosser, Sokol Blosser Winery President

A meal at Joel Palmer House is a master class in Willamette Valley’s finest wines. Thanks to the Czarneckis’ decades-long relationships with local vintners, and the meticulous curation of Director of Hospitality & Lead Sommelier Levi Seed, the wine program at the Joel Palmer House includes the nation’s largest and most sophisticated collection of Willamette Valley Pinot Noir.

Verticals of preeminent Willamette Valley pioneers like Adelsheim, Shea, and Archery Summit Arcus stretch back to the 1990s; ultra-allocated cult labels like Thomas, Authentique and Antica Terra invite guests to experience wines no other restaurant can. In some cases, not even the producing winery still has bottles of the older vintages available at Joel Palmer House. The restaurant list includes an exclusive vertical of Quarter Mile by Adelsheim, as well as deep collections of Domaine Drouhin, Ken Wright, 00, Bergstrom, Evening Land, Rose and Arrow, and many more.

“We have such a large cellar with so many different representations of Oregon Pinot Noir,” says Director of Hospitality and Lead Sommelier Levi Seed. “That means we can open things from 5, 10, 15 or 20 years ago and judge for ourselves, and give our guests an accurate opinion.”

“We are delighted to have Joel Palmer House as an exclusive carrier of the Rose & Arrow Estate wines for restaurants in Oregon. Levi Seed has masterfully crafted a program that exemplifies the extensive possibility of wine when paired intentionally to exquisite food.”

- Virginia Kiser, Rose & Arrow Estate Director of Operations

With more than 2,000 bottles of 600+ different wines in the cellar – around 96% of which are from Oregon – the wine program aims to showcase the tremendous diversity and range of the wine region’s most sought-after bottles. Levi Seed believes that what makes Oregon Pinot Noir special is that it defies generalization. Primary fruit characteristics can range from bright, red berry fruit to black, brambled, and stewed fruits, with secondary characteristics spanning savory aromas of petrichor, organic earth, herbaceousness and minerality. Whether guests prefer their Pinot Noir



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ethereal, light, elegant, opulent, dark, extracted or robust, Joel Palmer House has a bottle they will savor.

The old pairing adage, ***what grows together goes together***, has deeper meaning here. Wild mushrooms are symbiotic with the flora around them, thanks to vast underground networks of mycelial threads that communicate with the roots of other species and one another. With hundreds of varieties of wild mushrooms and dozens of different Pinot Noir clones and rootstocks in Oregon, the possibilities for delicious connection are mind-boggling.

While a by-the-glass list is available, the sommelier team encourages guests to open a bottle of mature Willamette Valley Pinot Noir to enjoy across several courses. “You’d be amazed at what Oregon Pinot can do,” says Chef Owner Christopher Czarnecki.



*“Congratulations of the highest order are due to the Joel Palmer House crew. They have shown great courage to have a wine list so focused on the Willamette Valley. **No one else in the world has anything like it.**”*

- David Adelsheim, Adelsheim Vineyard Founder



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THE CULINARY EXPERIENCE

The Joel Palmer House is a wild mushroom restaurant, and guests have come from across the globe to experience its forest-to-table cuisine. This family tradition began with Chef Owner Christopher Czarnecki's great-grandfather Joe Czarnecki, who foraged wild mushrooms for the soup and pierogies he served to tavern guests in the early 20th century. To honor this history, **Joe's Wild Mushroom Soup** is still available on the Mushroom Madness menu, along with the irresistible **Three Mushroom Tart** Christopher's mother, Heidi, created with *Suillus luteus* (Slippery Jacks), *Boletus edulis* (porcini), and *Agaricus bisporus* (wild button mushrooms).

For Chef Christopher Czarnecki, flavor and quality are paramount. The restaurant uses only wild-foraged mushrooms – never cultivated – because of their greater intensity and character. “Wild mushrooms have a sense of terroir, like wine,” he says. That powerful taste of place is an essential part of the Joel Palmer House experience.



Oregon's elusive wild delicacies feature in all of the Czarnecki family classics, and most of the seasonally changing dishes. Christopher Czarnecki and Levi Seed collaborate on the globally inspired offerings, which have included **maitake hummus** with burrata; **spring greens with strawberry-candy cap dressing**, **pickled enoki mushrooms**, fromage blanc and dried blueberry; Jamaican **jerk sturgeon with chanterelles**, mashed plantains, black bean pico and cilantro-lime crema; Northwest **mussels steamed in shoyu ramen broth with black trumpets** and togarashi compound butter; and local **duck breast marinated in elderberry with morels**, lavender honey, and tender kalettes.

Every dish is carefully crafted to pair with locally made wines from Willamette Valley.

“When restaurants tout their “farm to table” ethos, The Joel Palmer House actually executes on the promise with their food and with their wine program.... A true dining experience paired with our nation’s best-stocked cellar of Willamette Valley wines.”

- Donna Morris & Bill Sweat, Winderlea Vineyard & Winery Owners



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THE MENU OPTIONS

Guests select from among several prix-fixe options. **The Oregon Omakase** and **Tête de Cuvée Oregon Omakase** are inspired by the Japanese omakase tradition at fine sushi bars, where diners entrust their choices entirely to the chef. These menus invite guests to explore the full range of the kitchen's creativity, in as many courses as their complete satisfaction requires. The more expensive Tête de Cuvée option includes the rarest and most prized ingredients available, such as registered Japanese Wagyu beef, white sturgeon caviar, Pacific Northwest oysters, and foie gras.

For the five-course **Mushroom Madness** menu, and the three-course **Mushroom Sunshine** menu (available only on weeknights in the rainy season, January-May), guests select the specific dishes they wish for each course, from a list of seasonally changing options.





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THE HISTORY

Christopher Czarnecki's great-grandfather Joe came to America in the early 20th century from Poland, bringing with him a deep knowledge and cultural appreciation for wild mushroom foraging. Settling in Reading, Pennsylvania, he quickly learned to identify the local edible varieties, and in 1916, he opened a tavern serving Polish food to other hard-working Polish immigrants. The menu included wild mushroom pierogies and piroshkis, and wild mushroom soup for 20 cents a bowl.

Joe's Tavern gained a gallic thread when Joe's son, Joe Jr., took over in the mid-1940s. Joe Jr. and his wife Wanda were both francophiles, and they added dishes like filet mignon en croute with wild mushroom duxelles, along with fine wines and cocktails that elevated the dining experience significantly.

The third generation of Czarnecki restaurateurs, Christopher's parents Jack and Heidi, pushed the family's wine and wild mushroom passion to its logical conclusion: moving the restaurant to Oregon's mushroom-rich, burgeoning wine country. They purchased the former residence of Oregon pioneer Joel Palmer in Dayton, the heart of the Willamette Valley, and renovated the 1857 home to give it new life. The family's wild mushroom fine dining restaurant reopened with its current name and address in 1997 – one year after Jack Czarnecki's *A Cook's Book of Mushrooms* won a coveted James Beard Award.



Jack and Heidi's son, Christopher, served in active combat duty in Iraq cooking for the U.S. Army in the early 2000s. When he returned from his tour of duty, he resumed working with his parents at the Joel Palmer House and eventually took over from them in 2007. Under Christopher's guidance, the restaurant has undergone a respectful modernizing of the dining room, and a creative renaissance with the collaboration of Levi Seed, the dynamic new Director of Hospitality & Lead Sommelier.

For additional details and an architectural history of the Joel Palmer House building,
please visit the restaurant website:

<https://www.joelpalmerhouse.com/history-new>



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THE PEOPLE

Christopher Czarnecki, Chef and Owner



As a fourth-generation restaurateur, Christopher Czarnecki grew up in the family business – filling water glasses for guests by age 9, and analyzing every meal to determine how it could be made more delicious. He learned the importance of beverage pairings early in life when his grandmother recommended a glass of milk with his pancakes, rather than the orange juice he had asked for. He took those lessons to heart and has been building on them ever since.

In 2003, Christopher joined the U.S. Army working in food service, which resulted in a year of cooking in combat boots in war-torn Iraq. His experience in the military deepened his technical precision and helped shape his outlook on adversity. He returned home in 2006 with greater patience, a thicker skin, and a clear sense of how *not* to lead a team. After helping his parents re-establish the family restaurant in Willamette Valley, he took the reins of the Joel Palmer House in 2007. Under his watch, the restaurant has only deepened its commitment to outstanding hospitality, responsible business practices, and Willamette Valley wine.

Christopher stewards his family's legacy with humility and a commitment to continued improvement. He is fond of saying, "We stand on the shoulders of giants, and we continue to reach higher." Family comes first at this family restaurant, and Christopher spends every opportunity he can with his wife, Mary, and two sons – the fifth generation of Czarnecki restaurateurs.



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THE PEOPLE (cont.)

Levi Seed, Director of Hospitality and Lead Sommelier



Levi Seed is a trained chef and certified sommelier committed to “constant and neverending improvement in hospitality excellence.” His precocious talent, dedication, and collection of 38 custom-made suits set him apart and fuel his drive to excel.

Growing up in the Willamette Valley, Levi dreamed of being a chef from a very young age. A grueling, years-long battle with childhood leukemia pushed him to pursue his greatest passion after high school, and he enrolled in the Oregon Culinary Institute. There he tasted wine for the first time, and earned his degree in fine dining, culinary arts, and management.

Levi honed his cooking skills in Shanghai and Portland before joining the wine world, working at Argyle, Domaine Serene and Ponzi as well as developing the beverage program for a \$17M fine dining restaurant project. In September 2020, he came to the Joel Palmer House as Assistant Manager and Lead Sommelier, helping Chef Owner Christopher Czarnecki manage staff and the growing beverage program. With his culinary background and talent, he was soon promoted to Director of Hospitality, working with Chef Czarnecki to develop seasonal menus and a wine program that pushes the envelope of Oregon fine dining.

Levi serves on several executive boards of directors for local childhood cancer organizations, and donates his time and skills to support awareness and fundraising campaigns. He holds the title of Certified Sommelier from The Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas.