



## Ted Hopson

Co-Owner and Executive Chef

Inspired by Co-Owner and Executive Chef Ted Hopson's own nostalgic memories of cheerful family meals, [The Bellwether](#) in Studio City, CA puts forth an eclectic New American menu. After honing his skills at some of the most influential restaurants in Southern California—from fine dining venues to hip burger joints—Hopson now brings his diverse experience and curious palate to The Bellwether, incorporating Italian, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern flavors for a culinary spread that proudly crashes borders and challenges convention. “The Bellwether was meant to be different, and it is,” Hopson explains.

“I believe simplistic foods can be very elegant,” he says. With a rustic technique, he calls on equal parts of his classical Le Cordon Bleu training, as well as his imagination, to craft elevated riffs on familiar comfort foods. “I create food with deep dimensions through the use of really high quality ingredients that we spend a lot of time discovering and sourcing.” Whether local or international, Hopson settles for no less than artisanal producers that match his devotion to flavor and quality.



Growing up in a large Italian household in the Los Angeles suburbs, Hopson developed a reverence for food at an early age, assisting his Italian-born grandmother in the garden and kitchen practically as soon as he could walk. “Every holiday, all the guests would end up in the kitchen drinking wine,” he says, identifying the source of his welcoming, engaging culinary persona. Pursuing a double major in English and math from the University of California, Riverside, he kept his culinary flame burning by cooking at Mario's Place, Riverside's premier Italian restaurant. After graduating in 2003, Hopson realized that cooking remained his greatest lifelong passion, and enrolled at the California School of Culinary Arts in Pasadena. He earned his degree in 2005, and began working at Downtown L.A.'s Michelin-starred Water Grill under acclaimed chef David LeFevre for six years, ascending from intern to executive sous chef.

In 2010, the young culinary professional joined buzz-worthy Sunset Strip restaurant, The Eveleigh, as its opening executive sous chef, but, shortly thereafter, caught the attention of highly respected chef and restaurateur Sang Yoon. Yoon plucked Hopson from The Eveleigh and appointed him executive chef at Father's Office in Culver City, a gastropub nationally regarded for its gourmet hamburgers. Hopson's responsibilities expanded in 2011 to include oversight of the kitchen at nearby Lukshon, Yoon's contemporary Pan-Asian concept.

Hopson then joined an elite group of chefs to appear alongside Yoon on Bravo's “Top Chef Masters” in 2013, before accepting a position at Umami Restaurant Group—the company's Umami Burger serves another one of L.A.'s most famous burgers—as corporate executive chef. He departed a year later to open The Bellwether, a gastropub with strong local appeal, with former Father's Office colleague, Ann-Marie Verdi.

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Away from the kitchen, Hopson keeps busy with his two daughters and his ever-expanding collection of rare automobiles. He also enjoys competitively driving racecars, an unconventional hobby that reflects the chef's spirit of adventure.