



## Chef Jimmy Shimizu

Chef James Shimizu began his culinary journey in 1991 at the age of 18, when he was introduced to cooking by his uncle Junichi Iwasaki. His uncle was a hotel owner. He started working in Hakata, Japan at his uncles', hotel Clio Court, as a dishwasher and worked his way into cooking as a line cook. Chef Shimizu had a burning desire to cook in the United States. So he then traveled back to San Francisco after 5 years in Japan and started cooking at Harding Park Golf Course as the Head Chef of the country club's restaurant. He then journeyed back to Japan to hone his Japanese roots and culinary style where he spent 5 years working at Tano-Q restaurant in Hiroshima, Japan.

Then he traveled back to the United States where he worked as a food purveyor and a tuna buyer for 7 years until he got the itch to cook again. His search landed him at Sasa in Walnut Creek, where he began working the line. He then moved to their sister restaurant, Blue Gingko, in Black Hawk Ca. where he assumed his first role as Executive Chef. Then in 2016, Chef Shimizu, began his tenure at Ozumo in Oakland when he was named Chef de Cuisine. He quickly moved upwards in the company and assumed the title of Executive Chef at the flagship Ozumo restaurant in San Francisco in October 2017. A new project and challenge presented itself when Ozumo Concepts International expanded the operation and opened a new location in San Jose's Santana Row. Chef Shimizu has been the Chef de Cuisine for Ozumo on Santana Row since November 2018.

### **What inspired you to follow a career path in the kitchen?**

I always thought that cooking would be a very practical way to make a living. I was introduced to it by the hotel restaurant that his uncle owned and the "food was spectacular". I thought "People have got to eat". ☺

### **Tell us about some of the experiences you've had that helped defined your cooking style or philosophy.**

I would like to think my style is "Happy, Clean and Simple". Working with hard core chefs back in the early years in Japan and SF. He recalls, "getting hit in the back of the head with a spatula and ladle. I learned early on that a happy environment creates happy food, so I have always focused on that."

### **What do you think your signature dish is at Ozumo? What makes it special?**

My signature dish at the Yokozuna Steak at Ozumo SF. It was a 1lb Mishima-American Wagyu Ribeye Steak with garlic-butter ponzu. It was on the menu the entire time he was there. It was \$90. It was introduced at a time when the American food scene was just learning about Japanese wagyu beef.