

## Featured Chef: Cullen Campbell

Written by Interview and photos by Debby Wolvos

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### Featured Chef Cullen Campbell of Crudo.



AFM: How did your restaurant concept of *Crudo*—raw meets Italian--come into play?

CC: I really wanted to do a sushi restaurant and oddly enough, Japanese cooking and Italian cooking are very similar. Both styles have really high-end ingredients but are prepared in a very simplistic way.

AFM: What's the most important piece of your culinary past that has led you to where you are now?

CC: Working at Gregory's World Bistro of Scottsdale. It opened up my eyes to new cuisines and how to really cook.

AFM: We hear that you like to ride your bike when you are not in the kitchen.

CC. Absolutely. I do road biking, mountain biking and I have some cruisers as well.



AFM: Name a few of your favorite local restaurants.

CC: Hana Japanese Eatery, Nobuo at Teeter House. Also elements. Beau MacMillan's escargot potpie is one the greatest things in this city.

AFM: What's in your fridge at home?

CC: Nothing! My fiancée and business partner, Maureen, and I are too busy to be cooking at home, and I'm at Crudo until fairly late most evenings. I honestly don't want to eat that late! We enjoy experiencing food at other restaurants.

AFM: Is there a food that you dislike?

CC: No. I eat anything, and I will try anything. If I go to a restaurant and there's something I've never had, I have to have it.

AFM: When you were young, did you ever think that you'd become a chef?

CC: Actually, I had a feeling. I always took lots of art classes in high school. I watched the Food Network when I was in high school, and I realized that cooking is kind of like art.

AFM: Where do you get your fresh fish?

CC: Santa Barbara and Santa Monica. I love it when people come in and ask me just to feed them. Through that, people have begun requesting special ingredients such as sea urchin or abalone. We post it on Facebook and then all our regulars come in to enjoy it.



AFM: Where does your produce come from?

CC: Maya's Farm at South Mountain is my main go-to place. I've had many different arugulas in many different cities, and I always wonder how Maya grows the best arugula I've ever tasted.

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AFM: Congrats on re-opening Crudo. It's risky to open new and larger restaurant space in these tough economic times.

CC: We took a big chance on owning a much bigger restaurant than what we had originally wanted to do, and that was a good risk. It's ended up working out great. For me, being a chef and having Crudo is extremely fulfilling. I enjoy doing this all day every day and on my days off I just enjoy life!

[www.crudoaz.com](http://www.crudoaz.com)