

## Featured Chef: Aaron Chamberlin

Written by By Debby Wolvos

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**Chef Aaron Chamberlin, Executive Chef-Owner of St. Francis Restaurant.**



AFM: What was your vision for St. Francis?

AC: When I moved back here from San Francisco I saw a lack of great urban restaurants. I wanted to offer an urban restaurant with a menu that follows the seasons and works with local farmers.

AFM: "Neighborhood" is important to you at St Francis.

AC: Absolutely. St Francis is named after this neighborhood. We make simple, common food that is done really really well. We give good value using the highest quality ingredients. We want the neighborhood to come here. Kids eat free.

AFM: When you started the restaurant in Sept. of 2009, were you worried?

AC: I prepared well, so when we opened there was no doubt in my mind that this would work... yet it's a huge effort every day. We work around the clock, baking bread and making sure that we are the best that we can be. Now we are 70-plus employees strong with more than 26 in our kitchen staff.

AFM: How did you get your start in the culinary world?

AC: I started cooking at Hunts Hideaway Cafe in Apache Junction at age 14.

AFM: What is in your refrigerator at home?

AC: I pack my fridge with local produce that is in season...lettuce...tomatoes...local eggs... I juice all the time. I'm really focused on what I eat. My girlfriend Lee is extremely health conscious and she has been a great influence.



AFM: What was the last thing that you made at home?

AC: I just made a Vegan chick pea soup. I make dishes at home with grass fed beef and farm chickens -- healthy food--simple and quick.

AFM: Describe yourself.

AC: Every day matters. I push hard toward my goals. I get a thrill off of the basics of life: my shelter, what I put in my mouth, and my relationships. I would love to have kids some day. I don't own a TV, I don't waste time buying lots of stuff.

AFM: Do you collect anything?

AC: I have been collecting kitchen items for 25 years.

AFM: Name two of your favorite local restaurants.

AC: I'm super excited about all of the amazing restaurants in the Valley. I love Breadfruit. Also Nobuo.

AFM: Best selling items at your restaurant?

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AC: Our cucumber cooler, our burger, green chile stew, and cinnamon rolls with caramel sauce. I love to buy fresh produce at the Phoenix Market. It goes directly into our dishes.



AFM: What's in store for the Valley restaurant scene?

AFM: I hope that in the coming years people will be driving across town to eat an amazing zucchini dish, not an amazing pork dish. I want to show people that fresh food from the earth with great seasoning is so fulfilling.

AFM: What's next for you Chef?

AC: A new project that will debut in the fall.