

P R E S S



S T . H E L E N A

## **Award-Winning and Decorated Bocuse d'Or Competitor Chef Philip Tessier Takes the Helm at PRESS Restaurant in Napa Valley**

*Industry Veterans Cole Mathers, Darryl Bell and Ivan Marquez Join Notable Team; Restaurant Smartly Pivots During Covid Crisis with Takeout and Donation Programs*

St. Helena, CA (May 4, 2020) – As **PRESS Restaurant** marks its 15th anniversary this month, owner Samantha Rudd announces **Philip Tessier** has joined as **Chef/Partner** overseeing culinary and operational enhancements for the restaurant. Tessier has assembled a dynamic team of industry veterans who are now in the forefront including General Manager Cole Mathers (formerly Gary Danko), Chef de Cuisine Darryl Bell (Foundry & Lux/Hestan Culinary/Bouchon), and Pastry Chef Ivan Marquez (Broken Spanish/Bouchon/The French Laundry and previous Zagat 30 “Under 30” pick).

**PRESS** was founded by vintner Leslie Rudd in 2005, who envisioned an atmosphere that was warm, inviting, yet understated enough to let the food take center stage. The restaurant currently boasts the largest collection of Napa Valley wines in the world. Daughter Samantha took the reins after Leslie’s passing in 2018. She states, “My father always said his biggest successes were with partners he shared vision and values. When I first met Phil, it was his character and values I admired even more than his world-class skills. I look forward to what we will do together with the amazing team at PRESS to build upon the foundation my father built for 15 years.”

Tessier has brought the same passion, intensity, creativity, curiosity, and unbridled energy that has defined his 24-year career thus far. His leadership and distinguished culinary background have been instrumental in making the restaurant nimble and pivot through the ongoing covid crisis. The rigid training he received at some of the most acclaimed restaurants in the world set him up to rise to the various challenges the industry is currently facing. As soon as shelter in place was ordered, the team immediately pivoted to a takeout model in order to keep as many staff employed as possible. Tessier led the efforts of joining with [The Boys and Girls Clubs of St. Helena and Calistoga on “Feed Our Families,”](#) a new donation campaign launched on April 22nd in partnership with [Gott’s Roadside](#) and [Brasswood](#) to provide meals to Napa Valley families who have been impacted by Covid-19. The nutritious meals are being made by the three restaurants to start, and as more large-scale donors contribute, additional restaurants will be brought on board. Since kicking off nearly two weeks ago, they have served over 3000 meals, and now are averaging 800 meals per week.

An alumnus of some of the most acclaimed restaurants in the world including Chef Roger Verge’s Le Moulin de Mougins and Chef Eric Ripert’s Le Bernardin, Tessier spent most of his formative years under Chef Thomas Keller at his various outposts: Per Se, Bouchon and The French Laundry. Encouraged by Keller, Tessier trained for the [Bocuse d’Or](#), considered the Olympics of the culinary world, where he received the Silver Medal, the first American ever to ascend the podium. Two years later, Tessier coached team USA led by Chef Mathew Peters to take gold, giving his book Chasing Bocuse a veritable fairytale ending.

Tessier explains, “We have a responsibility to give back. There’s nothing more gratifying to encourage someone to grow from a starting point and transition into a better person, personally and professionally, and to succeed in their own way. It lives way beyond just your own success. As PRESS celebrates its 15th year, it becomes even more compelling for us to take on a larger mentorship role for our team and cement the restaurant’s legacy for years to come. We want PRESS to become the restaurant where young cooks come to learn how to become great chefs.”

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## **ABOUT PRESS RESTAURANT**

It was a rainy Sunday afternoon in Paris when six friends in the wine business gathered at the iconic bistro L’Ami Louis for lunch. One of the men raised his glass in a toast, “To great wine, great food, and time to enjoy great friends.” This simple wish resonated deeply for vintner Leslie Rudd and the memory of that rainy afternoon in France, coupled with his passion for the best ingredients, love of fine Napa Valley wines and his appreciation for artisanal craftsmanship, brought about the vision, creation and foundation of PRESS Restaurant in May 2005. PRESS Restaurant puts the Napa Valley on a pedestal — the people, the ingredients, and the wines. For 15 years, PRESS has been a place for locals, winemakers, vintners, and guests from around the world to experience the best the Napa Valley has to offer — and it’s this sense of community that is at the heart of everything PRESS does. Under the leadership of Chef Philip Tessier, PRESS features legendary Bay Area purveyors alongside innovative new culinary talents to highlight California cuisine. The PRESS Culinary Team draws inspiration from around the globe while staying rooted in the style and ingredients that make the Napa Valley so special.

Following through on a pledge made by Founder Leslie Rudd, PRESS is home to the largest collection of Napa Valley wines in the world. The all-Napa Valley wine list celebrates current vintages as well as older wines going back over 50 years, as a result, wine is very much at the core of PRESS. With over 1200 selections, the restaurant has become the ideal place to taste one’s way through the rich history of the Napa Valley and deeply explore the U.S.’s most legendary wine-growing region.

PRESS is located at 587 St. Helena Highway, St. Helena, CA 94574, and is open seven days a week. During Covid-19, PRESS offers three-course dinners to take away as well as cocktails and wines from the cellar; a Drive Thru offering casual fare, and Wine Thru featuring tastes (to-go) and bottles of new release wine from Napa Valley wineries.

For more information, visit the PRESS [website](#); on Instagram: [@pressnapavalley](#); on Facebook: [Press Napa Valley](#); and on Twitter: [@pressnapavalley](#).

## **MEDIA KIT and IMAGES:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/8zkyk3h991kcls6/AACq7x3Q19MKbgBgmUuTIUIYUa?dl=0>

## **Keefer Bahrs PR Media Contact:**

Kristine Keefer, [kristine@keeferbahrspr.com](mailto:kristine@keeferbahrspr.com)

Laiko Bahrs, [laiko@keeferbahrspr.com](mailto:laiko@keeferbahrspr.com).