

## Instructor Biographies

### **Jodi Liano, Co-Founder and Head Recreational Instructor**

Fifteen years ago, Jodi was a recruiting executive who switched careers after returning home from a one-week cooking vacation in Italy with Giuliano Bugialli. That decision turned out to be one of the best she's ever made, with a culinary career spanning two decades.

Jodi has worked in the kitchens of Food Network, developed recipes for *Bon Appetit* and written multiple cookbooks for Williams Sonoma, including the popular "Cooking from the Farmers' Market." She was a head cooking instructor at Tante Marie's Cooking School for fourteen years before founding SF Cooking School, a dream that she's had for quite some time.

### **Catherine Pantsios, Director of Culinary Arts**

Catherine developed her extensive culinary knowledge over many years in restaurant kitchens, including Zuni Café, Hayes Street Grill, the Ritz Carlton in Chicago, and the Quilted Giraffe in New York. She was the chef and co-owner of the critically acclaimed Zola's Restaurant in San Francisco for nine years. Most recently, Catherine was the culinary supervisor and test kitchen chef at Ketchum Communications, a PR firm with a broad portfolio of agricultural commodity and ingredient clients.

Catherine applied that culinary prowess to teaching when she began overseeing the professional cooking program at Tante Marie's Cooking School. A mentor to Jodi, Catherine taught there for over eight years. She also taught classes at other popular Bay Area cooking schools such as Draeger's, Sur la Table, and Ramekins. Jodi thought of Catherine as the natural choice to run the professional Certificate Program in Culinary Arts at SFCS's inception. A career chef and instructor for 25 years, Catherine has a fierce passion and talent for teaching and mentoring in the kitchen.

### **Nicole Plue, Director of Pastry Arts**

SF Chronicle's restaurant critic once Michael Bauer once suggested Nicole was "one of the best pastry chefs in the country." Now, Nicole is on her way to becoming one of the best pastry instructors in the country.

Los Angeles native Nicole Plue began her restaurant career leading the celebrated bread program at Hawthorne Lane before Danny Meyer recruited her to be the pastry chef for the opening team at the famed Eleven Madison Park in New York. Nicole then opened Terence Conran's Guastavino's and was tapped by Martha Stewart to develop recipes for pastry and baking segments on Martha Stewart Living Television. She then went on to manage the pastry programs at AZ restaurant and Pazo restaurant, where her Red Wine Tart was named "Best Dessert of 2004" by Bon Appetit.

Nicole returned to California in 2004 to be executive pastry chef at Julia's Kitchen in Napa and then pastry chef at Richard Reddington's Redd in Yountville. It was during her tenure here that she was awarded Outstanding Pastry Chef by the James Beard

Foundation in 2010. Nicole's last post was as executive pastry chef at the celebrated Michelin-starred Cyrus restaurant in Healdsburg, California. She then launched Sideshow, a line of crunchy and salty/sweet ready-to-eat toppings and snacks. Sideshow gives a nod to beloved American cupboard staples like Saltine crackers and breakfast cereals, applying Nicole's deft pastry technique to familiar ingredients and producing unique treats.

In 2013 Nicole joined SFCS as the Director of Pastry Arts. Her role includes creating the curriculum for the program, teaching and mentoring students to develop their skills and careers in pastry and baking. Nicole's accolades include being named Pastry Chef of the Year 1998 by *San Francisco Magazine* and Rising Star Chef by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. She is also the proud recipient of the Forever Green Award, bestowed by the Girl Scouts of America on the occasion of the organization's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.