

Ross McKee – chef of Aquarius at the Santa Cruz Dream Inn

Growing up in a family of hoteliers, Ross McKee was exposed to the hospitality industry at a very early age. His family owned The Pine Inn and Cyprus Inn in downtown Carmel-by-the-Sea. By the time he turned 12, Ross had already worked in all aspects of the industry, but there was something different about working in a restaurant. This is where he discovered his passion.

Ross's love of food continued to develop over the years as he trained to become a chef while working as an apprentice at Tournaut Restaurant at the Pine Inn. When he was just 20, Ross and his family opened a new restaurant in Carmel, Le Coq d'Or, with Ross taking the helm as chef. From there, he worked at various area restaurants including the Carmel Valley Ranch resort and Shadowbrook restaurant. He also was Chef and co-owner of the Amapondo Mangrove Lodge in Port St. John, South Africa.

Over the years, Ross has combined his passion for food with travel. He has explored, cooked, and tasted his way through 23 countries on five continents. When he's not in the kitchen cooking, Ross also enjoys spending time at farmers markets, foraging mushrooms and herbs, scuba diving, hiking with his dog, and restoring British cars.