



Eric Tanaka

Partner and Executive Chef of Tom Douglas Seattle Kitchen

As partner and Executive Chef of Tom Douglas Seattle Kitchen, Eric Tanaka, has been an essential voice and partner in the growth and successes of this leading Seattle restaurant company. Affectionately known as “ET” within the company, Tanaka’s ability to transform Tom’s ideas and interests into iconic dishes and innovative restaurants is well known and led to *Seattle Metropolitan Magazine* dubbing him the “Restaurant Whisperer” in 2013.

Eric’s restaurant career started in 1988 at Michael’s Restaurant in Santa Monica, California. Seeing Eric’s budding potential, Chef Martin Garcia convinced Eric to move to New York to open a new restaurant with him and in just three short months, Eric became its Executive Chef. His cooking career went on to include stints at Giardino de Felecin in Italy and New York’s famed Gotham Bar and Grill.

It wasn’t until Eric traveled west and fell in love with Seattle in 1993, that he finally met his culinary partner, chef Tom Douglas. Their relationship started when Tanaka took a line-cook position at Tom Douglas’ first restaurant, Dahlia Lounge, where he quickly rose to the Executive Chef position. In 1997, Tom recognized Tanaka’s larger potential and promoted Eric to executive chef of Tom Douglas Seattle Kitchen, as well as business partner of the restaurant group. Since then, Tanaka has helped open twelve additional Tom Douglas Seattle Kitchen restaurants, including TanakaSan, inspired by Eric’s Japanese-American heritage.

Tanaka has been recognized for his talent by the restaurant industry over the years, including numerous James Beard award nominations, and won Best Chef Northwest in 2004. He was named one of Seattle’s “50 Most Influential People” by Seattle Magazine in 2013 and assisted Tom Douglas in his victory over Masuhara Morimoto on Food Network’s Iron Chef America.

In his twenty-year journey with Tom Douglas, Eric has grown to be a mentor for all cooks within Tom Douglas Seattle Kitchen, while playing a crucial role in company policy changes, community exposure and new projects.