

FEBRUARY 2022

PROVENCE

20

PROVENCE MARINASIDE
AT TWENTY YEARS



PROVENCE MARINASIDE 20 YEARS YALETOWN

February 2022 marks 20 years since award winning, French Mediterranean restaurant Provence Marinaside first opened its doors to the public. Much has changed in those 20 years.

In 2012, Provence opened the Wine Bar next door, specializing in wine and smaller plates. 2015 brought a renovation, giving Provence a clean and sophisticated new look; along with 32 new wine taps bringing the total number of taps to 48, and offering an extensive range of wines by the glass.

And of course, 2020 brought unprecedented challenges; as the restaurant was forced to rapidly adapt during a global pandemic. Nonetheless, they somehow managed to not only survive but thrive; no doubt due to the support of their loyal guest.

But as much as things change, they also stay the same. Provence have been lucky to retain a number of long-term staff; no small feat in the industry.

While the menu is periodically tweaked and updated, they have thankfully retained many of their guests favourite dishes. All of which makes Provence a bit of a Yaletown institution, and a beautiful and welcoming space to enjoy an outstanding dining experience.

To mark the 20th anniversary, we sat down with chef and owner Jean-Francis Quaglia to get his take on how it feels to hit the 20 year mark, what inspires him and his vision for the future. We also take the opportunity to talk to some of his long-time staff about what keeps them at Provence.



MATISSE | REMI
JF & ALESSANDRA'S SONS
2002



RUMI | SAFIA | ELLIO
2022
JF & ALESSANDRA'S GRANDDAUGHTERS

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JEAN-FRANCIS
20 YEARS
CHEF/OWNER

Provence has been around for a long time, but this isn't your first restaurant in Vancouver. Where did you work before opening your own restaurant?

When I first came to Vancouver, I worked at Le Coq D'Or under Chef Bruno Born. Following that I moved to the Sheraton Wall Centre, where I was the Chef at Azure and Indigo after that.

You must have worked with some great chefs while you were coming up, who has inspired you?

At the hotel Negresco in Nice, I worked with Chef Dominique Lestanc, his influence has played a part in how I cook, and how I run my business. In fact, in 2007, I was honoured to host Chef Lestanc as a guest in my kitchen at Provence where he created a special menu for our guests.

And of course, I have to mention my mother, Suzanne Quaglia, who ran her own restaurant when I was growing up. She was an inspiration

and teacher to me throughout my life.

Where do you get ideas or inspirations for new menu items?

I definitely take a lot of inspiration from the south of France and growing up near the Mediterranean Sea. There's a lot of fresh fish, and produce in that area. When it comes to fresh ingredients, Vancouver and the Mediterranean have a lot in common.

Sometimes, people are surprised to see flavours from Greece, Spain, or Turkey showing up in my cooking. You have to remember though, that throughout history, there has been a lot of mixing of cultures around the Mediterranean Sea, and so too a lot of mixing of flavours. You could say that the Mediterranean is the birth place of fusion cuisine.

And of course I have a very multicultural kitchen, so there's certainly influences from my cooks and chefs. I am a firm believer in encouraging my cooks to be creative, and seeing where we can go by working together.



PROVENCE MARINASIDE

What is your cooking philosophy?

Simple, fresh, and flavourful. I like to use local and seasonal ingredients as much as possible.

When you start with high quality ingredients, it's easy to produce high quality food.

You opened the restaurant with your wife and father-in-law back in 2002, that must have been

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an adventure. Tell me about that experience.

I'm very thankful for the experience, although we did buy out Nicholas about four or five years in.

At that time, Alessandra was mostly running our original restaurant, Provence Mediterranean Grill, with my mother-in-law, Dorothy. A few years ago, we sold that location to a former Provence Sous-Chef, since then Alessandra, has been on hiatus, pursuing her other passions.



PROVENCE MARINASIDE PRIOR TO BEING RENOVATED

How is Provence today different from your original vision?

Provence has been constantly evolving every year since we first started.

We've completely renovated the space both inside and out to keep it vibrant, fresh and current.

With that, has come some changes to the menu format, but we're always careful to keep guest favourites.

I should mention that the wine program has gone through some huge changes over the years too. I've always been a wine lover, and a few years ago, I decided that the restaurant should embrace the new technology coming out in the wine

industry. So when we renovated, we added 32 more wine taps, and several wine preservation systems to the mix. This has really allowed us to be a major player in the Vancouver wine scene. If you haven't yet, I encourage you to drop by for a glass.



PROVENCE MARINASIDE WINE TAPS

Provence has a number of long term staff right?

Yes, I have been very fortunate to have been able to keep staff for a long time; back of the house, front of the house, and management. Some have been with me since the very beginning. In this industry, it's almost unheard of for people to stay in one restaurant for that long.

I really appreciate their dedication, loyalty and hard work. Provence wouldn't be what it is today without the staff.

What do you think makes them stay at Provence?

I have been very involved in the business since day one. I'll do anything in the restaurant that's needed, from fixing something, to dishwashing, to cleaning *#@% in a toilet.

I think when you care about your business it shows, and staff like to be with someone who cares.

I'm fortunate after twenty years that I can be less involved in the day to day of the business, and rely on my staff to take care of things for me. Without a strong staff, I would probably need to

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be a lot more involved.

At the end of a long day, what's your comfort food and beverage of choice?

I always enjoy a margarita, but sometimes it's a cosmopolitan.

Calamari is a great when you just want a snack. Sometimes, but not too often, I'll have a steak. I also really like the mushroom ravioli on my menu.

What's a meal you enjoy on a special occasion? Crab, Dungeness crab, King crab; really just any kind of crab.

Has living in Vancouver influenced what you cook and what you eat?

Absolutely, there's so much local seafood. I really enjoy cooking with fresh, local ingredients.

When you're not busy in the kitchen, how do you like to relax?

I really like riding my motorcycle. In fact, my nickname is Moto Chef. Even my business card features an illustration of a chef riding a motorcycle.

Sometimes though, it's nice to just relax at home and watch Netflix.



MOTO CHEF

What show are you watching right now?

I just finished Lupin, now I'm watching Ozark.

What is your focus for Provence in the coming years?

Right now, I just want to focus on remaining relevant during the pandemic, and to always continue to evolve the business.

What about for yourself personally?

I'd like to take more motorcycle trips. A few years ago, a buddy and I rode our bikes down the Baja Coast. It was great seeing the Mexican culture.

I'd like to spend more time with family and friends back in France too. And I have three grand kids now. I love spending time with Safia and the twins, Rumi and Ellio.

In 2021, you were named a Chevalier of the Ordre du Mérite Agricole. That's a huge honour, tell me how it feels to be recognized like that, and what it means for the restaurant.

At first I didn't realize the honour of getting this recognition. Then when I got it physically presented to me by Phillippe Sutter, the Consul General of France in Vancouver, I started to get a lot of messages congratulating me. That's really when it started to sink in, just how much of an honour it is to receive this award.

I guess I'm a knight now. I celebrated by sabering a bottle of champagne with a real sword. The medal, certificate, and the cork from the champagne bottle are framed and hang in the restaurant. We've gotten other awards over the years, but this one is special to me.



PHILIPPE SUTTER | JEAN-FRANCIS QUAGLIA

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JOHN BLAKELEY | JEAN-FRANCIS QUAGLIA | MICHEL JACOB
THREE CHEVALIER OF THE ORDRE DU MÉRITE AGRICOLE

Besides your knife, what's the one kitchen gadget you can't do without?

My Cutco kitchen shears. They're hands down, the best scissors I've had; I use them for everything.

Anything else you want to say?

I'd like to thank all the staff who've been a part of Provence over the years; not just the people that have been here for twenty years, but everyone who has contributed.

There are too many names to remember, but I think there's a few from the past that are important to mention.

Eoin Bettencourt, Victor Duarte, Doug Wilcox, and Cullin David all come to mind. They were with me at the beginning of this journey, and helped to shape what Provence has become.

Thank you to all of you.



JEAN-FRANCIS QUAGLIA



PROVENCE MARINASIDE



JEAN-FRANCIS | MOHIT
MATT W | SHELDON | MATT L
COREY | FLORIAN



TWVB WINE TAPS

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LISA
20 YEARS
MANAGER

What's kept you at Provence for so long?

We have created a unique family here over the years, and you can't leave family! Both my co-workers and our regular guests make work more than work.

Why do you think that Provence has had so many years of success?

I attribute our success to wonderful food and a great team! The location doesn't hurt either.

Tell me about a great guest interaction that you've had at Provence.

I would have a hard time choosing one particular interaction, we have shared so much with so many wonderful people through the years. We have watched kids grow and faces change. We have celebrated birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and life. We have amazing people, both staff and guests.

What's your favourite menu item past or present?

I have always been a huge fan of our bouilla-

baise... starting at the first Provence restaurant.

My go to brunch is the Smoked Salmon Benny.



BOUILLABAISE

What's your after work beverage of choice?

I love a glass of rosé or bubbles - Veuve Clicquot is always a great choice.

How has Provence evolved and stayed relevant for 20 years?

We don't rest on our laurels and always want the best experience for our guests. The kitchen keeps the menus fresh while still retaining the favorites of the past. We are all young at heart!

What do you see for the next 20 years at Provence?

I see many happy faces and enjoy every day as it comes. I have been blessed to call Provence home.



CHEERS TO YOU



PROVENCE MARINASIDE

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SCOTT
20 YEARS
PURCHASE MANAGER

What's kept you at Provence for so long?

The large kitchen. This space was designed by chef Jean-Francis, and his attention to detail throughout the kitchen shows. It's a real pleasure to work in such a well thought out space.

Why do you think that Provence has had so many years of success?

Great food at a great price, and the portions are perfect.

What's your favourite menu item past or present?
I really like the rack of lamb, and the seafood linguini. They're both staples on the menu and I hope they stay forever.

What do you see for the next 20 years at Provence?

What we've done up to now seems to work, so I think we'll just keep going the way we have been.



PAULINE
20 YEARS
BAKER/SERVER

What's kept you at Provence for so long?

All of the amazing people. We're one big family at Provence!

Tell me about a great guest interaction that you've had at Provence.

Serving our regular guests is a highlight of working at Provence. It brings me great joy providing an excellent dining experience for them.

With all the shared laughs and stories, our regular guests have also become part of the family!

What's your favourite menu item past or present?
The herb crusted goat cheese followed by the seafood linguini.

What's your after work beverage of choice?

I always love a caesar after brunch, or maybe a glass of French rosé.



EMRYS
20 YEARS
MANAGER

What's kept you at Provence for so long?

The people. It's all about my co-workers and the guests. Without them, this job wouldn't be the same. If I didn't feel like they were my family, I might have moved on by now.

Why do you think that Provence has had so many years of success?

Again, it's the people... It always comes back to the people I work with and all of our guests. Provence wouldn't be what it is without the staff and guests.

What's your favourite menu item past or present?

There's been so many great dishes, but I think my favourite is the daube de boeuf - a hearty stew made from red wine braised beef. I can't recall if it's ever been on the regular menu, but it's been a part of many special menus over the years.

What's your after work beverage of choice?

I'm a pretty simple guy when it comes to that sort

of thing. I just like to have a nice cold beer at the end of a busy day. Right now, my choice is the Kronenbourg Blanc.

How has Provence evolved and stayed relevant for 20 years?

I don't think it's that hard to stay relevant in the restaurant world; as long as you can provide consistently excellent service, and great food.

But if I'm pressed, I would say that it's our people. Like I said before, it always comes back to the people. We've been fortunate to have a great team who are passionate about what they do, and that keeps our guests coming back time and time again.

What do you see for the next 20 years at Provence?

I don't know, twenty years is a long time. I guess, we'll just keep doing what we do, and see what each new year brings us.



CAMERA & CORN



CARMEN
20 YEARS
SERVER

What's kept you at Provence for so long?

Definitely the relationships with guests that I've made through out the years. And of course, the family that we've created as a staff.

Why do you think that Provence has had so many years of success?

We put our heart and soul in to working here, making everyone that comes in feel welcome, and giving our best service to them.



GRILLED HALIBUT

Tell me about a great guest interaction that you've had at Provence.

We have a long time guest who had a stroke many years ago, and was in a pretty bad state. His eyes light up and he gives us a little smile when he rolls through the door. He grabs my hand and squeezes it. Before Covid, he would get a kiss on the cheek.

What's your favourite menu item past or present?

The halibut is by far my favourite. With the smoked tomato vinaigrette... amazing!

What's your after work beverage of choice?

I like a caesar at the end of a long shift. It's like supper in a glass.



MEDITERRANEAN CAESAR



RACK OF LAMB

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JOSHUA
20 YEARS
WINE DIRECTOR

What's kept you at Provence for so long?

I started with Provence in June 2002 as a cook. I was in university at the time and needed some supplemental income. The energy and passion within the restaurant was infectious, and I found myself wanting to be here more and more. I have left to pursue other ventures, but I have come back because it feels like home. And the people here, through thick and thin, are like family.

Why do you think that Provence has had so many years of success?

I attribute Provence's success to our old mantra: "good food, good wine, good people". I think it was Alessandra who instilled that in me. We're creating an environment for guests to break bread, be merry, and not think about their jobs and troubles for a few hours in their day.

Our guests can be transported from their day to day by sitting on the patio, with a glass of rosé and a bowl of fish soup, and if they squint just

a little bit, the yachts bobbing in the marina can look just like the yachts in St. Tropez. Was it Lisa who said "A trip to the South of France without the jet lag."?

Tell me about a great guest interaction that you've had at Provence.

I have had many great guest interactions over the years. Many of our guests I would consider friends and I look forward to seeing them when I return from my days off. We're very fortunate to have a great community around us.

There's one very kind lady who cares for snails and crows. She comes by often to tell us how they're doing.

What's your favourite menu item past or present?

My favourite menu item has to be the Bouillabaisse. I eat it at least once a week. It's rich in Omega3 and Riboflavin. If I feel under the weather, or need a little boost to my constitution, I have a bowl and feel good as new. Pairing the dish to Clos Cibonne's Cuvée Caroline Rosé is nothing short of a transcendental experience.

What's your after work beverage of choice?

My after work beverage of choice is likely a Negroni. How can 3 simple ingredients taste so good?

Now, I have to wait until I get home to enjoy one. They're a little stiff to drink before driving home.

How has Provence evolved and stayed relevant for 20 years?

I think Provence has maintained relevance for the last 20 years by changing and adapting to the times. Whether it was the introduction of The Wine Bar, the renovation 8 years ago, or pivoting during Covid, it has the ability to adapt and not stay stuck in its ways. Now, Provence is considered a Vancouver institution.



PAULA
20 YEARS
SERVER

What's kept you at Provence for so long?

I've stayed with Provence for a number of reasons. First and foremost, is chef Jean-Francis. It's great to work for someone I not only respect as a boss but think of as a friend. Second, all of the amazing staff, new and old, they are my family. Also, the regular guests that I get to see every day. And, I have to say that I never get tired of the view.

Why do you think that Provence has had so many years of success?

I think we have a wonderful staff full of amazing people cooking, serving, managing and cleaning; that has kept the restaurant running smoothly for all these years.

What's your favourite menu item past or present?

For breakfast I love the croque monsieur benedict.

For lunch the prawn and scallop spaghetti.

For dinner the herb crusted goat cheese, followed

by the half chicken provençal with a side of fries, then the clafoutis aux fruits rouge for dessert.

What's your after work beverage of choice?

A glass of wine, or a negroni are a great way to wind down at the end of the day.



NEGRONI



HERB CRUSTED GOAT CHEESE



CLAFOUTIS AUX FRUITS ROUGE



JOANNE
20 YEARS
MANAGER

What's kept you at Provence for so long?
We're like a big crazy family, and I love the whole team.

Why do you think that Provence has had so many years of success?
We have a unique and fantastic team that keeps people coming back.

Tell me about a great guest interaction that you've had at Provence.
There are too many great stories to tell. Honestly I love our regulars and consider many of them to be close friends.

What's your favourite menu item past or present?
Grilled halibut with smoked tomato vinaigrette.

What's your after work beverage of choice?
I can't get enough of the bubbles. Whether it's prosecco, champagne, or a sparkling wine from the okanagan, I always love a glass of bubbles.

How has Provence evolved and stayed relevant for 20 years?

Our chefs and kitchen team always create interesting delicious food that people come back for over and over again.

The front of house team is very engaged with the guests, and keeps them interested in what we're doing.

What do you see for the next 20 years at Provence?

Continued success and a lot of fun.



BUBBLES BUBBLES BUBBLES



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ESSEX
20 YEARS
COOK

What's kept you at Provence for so long?
I've always enjoyed working with chef JF. I stay because I think loyalty is important.

Why do you think that Provence has had so many years of success?
We have a great management team, both front and back of the house.

What's your favourite menu item past or present?
I've always loved the pate de campagne whenever we feature it.



PATE DE CAMPAGNE



CARLO
20 YEARS
COOK

What's kept you at Provence for so long?
For me it's a no brainer; JF has always been very supportive and I enjoy working with him.

What's your favourite menu item past or present?
The whole Mediterranean fish. We use many different types of fish, but my favourite, is the Sea Bream.

What do you see for the next 20 years at Provence?
I think it would be fun to buy the restaurant, and hire JF to be my dishwasher.



WHOLE MEDITERRANEAN FISH



COCKTAIL

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MICHAEL

20 YEARS

SERVER

Unfortunately, Michael was not available to be interviewed. We asked some of his co-workers to tell us a bit about what makes him an important part of the team.

Jean-Francis

Michael has always been a leader, and guide to the newer staff. His attention to detail, professionalism, compassion, and experience make him a great asset.

Pauline

As a part of the team, he always shows his appreciation for help when he's busy, and is ready to help others when they need it.

Carmen

He's like the Yoda of Provence. He's been working in fine dining for a long time, so he really knows what he's doing. He's always ready to help the new staff learn, and is a great mentor to them.



NANCY

20 YEARS

MEDIA RELATIONS

We don't see you working in the restaurant, what's your role at Provence?

I started with Provence shortly after the first Provence (Mediterranean Grill) opened in Point Grey about 25 years ago. As Provence Marinaside's publicist, most of my work is with media, letting them know about all the wonderful things happening at the restaurant.

Everytime you hear Chef Jean-Francis being interviewed on the radio or see him/the restaurant on TV, see something about him and/or Provence in print or on a website, newsletter or a blog post, that's my work. By providing media with information tailored to their audience needs I work to interest them in a story whether it's commenting on something related to the restaurant community or on a story specific to Provence Marinaside like a special promotion or event.

If you do see me in the restaurant, most likely I will be coordinating a TV shoot, or hosting a me-

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dia guest to taste a new menu or sample a wine pairing.

What makes Provence unique among your clients?

Chef Jean-Francis leads through respect and kindness - encouraging staff to learn more or try something new. His style of 'servant leadership' inspires me and everyone else to go that extra mile. The fact that so many staff have been with Provence since the beginning, and many others for more than 10 years, is incredibly unusual in the restaurant industry and speaks volumes to the quality of Chef JF's leadership. It's a privilege to work with him and the rest of the team.

Why do you think that Provence has had so many years of success?

See my comment above about Chef Jean-Francis' leadership style. Provence has thrived because of the excellence of its team and the team has thrived because of Chef Jean-Francis. Over the years, a few of the staff have left Provence for opportunities elsewhere but many come back because they have come to understand what a special place Provence is. Provence's menu has remained timeless - presenting Provençal-inspired dishes using the best of BC ingredients. People know when they come to Provence they will immediately feel at home, see staff who know them, and enjoy a memorable meal.

What's your favourite menu item past or present?

That's a terrible question! I love all of it and could never choose just one.

Brunch - Salmon Benedict

Lunch - Fish Soup and Herb Crusted Goat Cheese

Dinner - Crab & Lobster Bamboo Rice, Rack of Lamb, Bouillabaise

Dessert - Tarte au Citron in spring & summer, Fondant au Chocolat in fall & winter

How has Provence evolved and stayed relevant for 20 years?

Provence was amongst the first Vancouver restaurants to start working with local food producers/growers, they are an inaugural member of OceanWise - both of these things we take as a given today, but back 20 years ago, it was really unusual. Over the years Provence's menu has remained timeless - presenting Provençal-inspired dishes using the best of BC ingredients. What keeps Provence relevant? Supporting local, a reputation for consistent quality, a Front-of-House staff who get to know our guests through years of serving them, and a loyal and innovative kitchen brigade.



TARTE AU CITRON

What do you see for the next 20 years at Provence?

Over the years I watched Chef Jean-Francis' sons, Matisse and Remi, work in the restaurant as they grew up, and I have had the privilege of working with Chef's mother, Chef Suzanne when she visited from France. Suzanne is no longer with us, and Chef's sons have gone on to other endeavours but I hope to see the day when his grandchildren are old enough to work at Provence. It would be wonderful if one of them grew up to take over the restaurant from their grandfather and carry on the tradition of this family-owned business.

