

Chef Aarón Sanchez

The son of celebrated Mexican cooking authority Zarela Martinez, Aarón's passion, commitment and skills have placed him among the country's leading contemporary Latin chefs.

As a co-host of Food Network's 'Melting Pot', Aarón introduced a national audience to his technique and creativity with contemporary interpretations of classic Latino cuisine. His audience and fans get to sample this fare at his restaurants, Paladar, located in New York City, and Mixx, a part of the Borgata Hotel and Spa in Atlantic City.

Born in 1976, in El Paso, Texas, Aarón has vivid memories of helping his mother prepare traditional Mexican foods for her thriving catering business. By 1984, the family had moved to New York and Zarela launched the acclaimed Café Marimba. It was here that eleven-year old Aarón got his first taste of professional kitchen life. By his sixteenth birthday, Aarón's flair for cooking earned him a place in a Masterclass with Chef Paul Prudhomme. Upon graduating from high school in 1992, Aarón returned to work full time for Prudhomme in New Orleans.

In 1993, Aarón studied culinary arts at Johnson and Wales in Providence, Rhode Island. He returned to New York in 1994 to work with renowned Nuevo-Latino chef, Douglas Rodriguez at Patria. It was there that Aarón met his 'Melting Pot' co-host, Alex Garcia. In March 1996, Patria earned a three-star New York Times review, further convincing Aarón that traditional Latin ingredients and their contemporary preparation were at the heart of a bold new culinary movement.

In 1996, Aarón and Alex left Patria to open Erizo Latino to critical acclaim. The two men received critical praise for their new venture. Following this, Aarón moved on to explore San Francisco's restaurant scene, where he worked with Chef Reed Hearon at Rose Pistola. After a year, he returned to New York as executive chef at L-Ray, a Gulf Rim and Caribbean bistro, where he received a positive review from the New York Times. Aarón then moved on to the executive chef's position at Isla, a restaurant inspired by pre-Revolutionary Cuba.

In February 2001, Aarón teamed up with Eamon Furlong to open Paladar, a pan-Latin inspiration on the Lower East Side. Funky, but chic, Paladar is a dining experience that incorporates the vibrant energy of the neighborhood with the relaxed intimacy and warmth of a Cuban Paladar.

In its first year, Paladar won Time Out New York's 2001 Award for Best New Lower East Side Restaurant and Best Latin American Restaurant in their 2002 Eating and Drinking Guide. On September 26th 2002, Eric Asimov of The New York Times Dining Out Section featured Paladar in a very positive review, stating: "...As long as Paladar...continues to employ the Nuevo Latino vernacular in a sound and appealing way, it is clear that it is deeper than a passing fancy".

Today, Aarón is a restaurateur, television personality, consultant, spokesperson and author. His first book, La Comida del Barrio, including recipes and photographs by Emmanuel Bastien, was published in May 2003. He has consulted with Proctor and Gamble, Target Stores, Ortega, as well as trade and food industry commissions worldwide. Aarón makes international appearances conducting cooking classes and events where he shares his knowledge of and passion for Latin cuisine with thousands of admirers throughout the year.