



CHRIS KAJIOKA Executive Chef, Hotel Wailea



Chris Kajioka, a Honolulu native, has never wanted to be anything other than a chef, and he has proven that he knows no bounds in perfecting his craft. Immediately after high school, he left paradise and moved across the country to receive his formal training and degree in the culinary arts from the prestigious Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY. Upon graduating, he moved across the country again to work at Ron Siegal's Dining Room at the Ritz-Carlton in San Francisco. Returning to the east coast, he went on to Thomas Keller's Per Se in New York.

Making his way west yet again, Kajioka worked his way up to Chef de Cuisine at Aziza in San Francisco, and subsequently continued on to Blaine Wetzel's Willows Inn of Lummi Island, Washington. Returning to his native Hawaii in 2012, he became the Executive Chef at Vintage Cave. Kajioka's classical culinary training combined with his affinity for his own heritage results in his own unique style: inventive dishes incorporating techniques from contemporary French cuisine with a distinctly Japanese sensibility. His cooking emphasizes the use of fresh, seasonal, and local ingredients. At Vintage Cave, Chef Kajioka earned nominations for the James Beard "Rising Star" Award and Food and Wine Magazine's "People's Best New Chef", as well as being awarded a place in the "Top Ten Dishes of 2013" from Food and Wine Magazine.

In 2015, Kajioka joined forces with British chef Anthony Rush, and began work on their forthcoming restaurant, Senia. Opening September 2016 in Honolulu's Chinatown, Senia will offer a cuisine that showcases their mutual culinary pedigree, as well and explores and celebrates Hawaii's abundance and ingredients. The restaurant represents a shared culinary evolution influenced by Kajioka and Rush's very different experiences and backgrounds, and will reflect a sense of place, heritage and true collaboration.