

Executive Chef

Homaro Cantu

Merely twenty nine years old, Chef Homaro Cantu is blazing the way into the new era of Postmodern cuisine. Heralded as one of America's most daring chefs, Chef Cantu pushes the limits of known taste, texture and technique in a stunning futuristic fashion at Moto.

A scientist at heart, Cantu is driven by insatiable curiosity and endless possibilities. And it is fair to say that the same enthusiasm that drove Cantu to dismantle his father's lawnmower multiple times and chomp on \$5, \$10 and \$20 dollar bills as a young boy still consumes him. Described as a "techno chef" or a "real life Willy Wonka", he brushes off these labels and merely calls himself a cook when asked. But if you delve a little deeper you will learn that this young, talented chef is aiming to shatter the rules surrounding the table by introducing new technologies in the kitchen. His goal: to entice 21st century diners to embrace unimaginable edible creations.

But make no mistake; Chef Cantu has not lost sight of what brings us all to the dinner table – great tasting food. While guests may be positively shell shocked with some of the mind boggling creations at Moto, rest assured that this young chef can cook. Having grown-up in Portland, Oregon, Cantu graduated from Le Cordon Bleu. He then worked his way up the ranks in nearly 50 kitchens on the West Coast before moving to Chicago. He moved to Chicago to work at Charlie Trotter's and spent four years there attaining the coveted title of Sous Chef before leaving to open Moto.

To dine at Moto is to gain a glimpse of the inner workings of this culinary prodigy's mind and the future of

gastronomy. Offering tasting menus of 5, 10 and 18 courses, Cantu stretches the imagination and takes you on a culinary adventure from the very first bite which may even be your menu. Homaro prints the evening's offerings on edible paper. These functional and delicious menus assume many final forms on the plate including risotto and alphabet soup.

This type of out-of-the-box thinking touches the entire dining experience – sometimes literally. One of his many inventions for which domestic and foreign patent applications are pending is his polymer box. A perfectly self-contained oven, the three-inch opaque box made of super insulating polymer is brought to 350 degrees in the oven before a raw piece of fish is placed inside. The box is then delivered to the table where it cooks right before the guest's eyes.

While your experience at Moto is sure to expand one's mind and palette, Cantu is not blazing new culinary trails for shock value alone but rather to change the way that people perceive and eat food. He views Moto as his laboratory and tests new technologies in the kitchen daily. Scientific elements such as liquid nitrogen and helium and devices such as a centrifuge and a hand-held ion particle gun make regular appearances in the Moto kitchen. And Cantu will be the first chef to zap food with a class IV laser, a cooking technique he will unveil in Spain in January 2006. With such lofty goals in mind and an impressive track record, it's hard to imagine what will be served up next at Moto. As Cantu modestly explains, "Gastronomy has to catch up to the evolution in technology and I'm just helping that process along."

moto Story

Tucked among the warehouses and lofts of Chicago's bustling Fulton Market, Moto exudes a forward-thinking energy from its very location. This lively meat packing district has recently emerged as one of Chicago's trendy neighborhoods much in part due to the imagination and prowess of its business owners. Driving down Fulton Market today offers pure stimulation from the delivery trucks sliding in and out of loading docks to the designer restaurants and galleries butting up against century-old warehouses. With a restaurant such as Moto shaping the future of gastronomy, it seems only fitting that it be located smack in the heart of this urban promise land.

Moto burst onto the Chicago dining scene in January 2004 and while the original concept was intended to be Japanese, that didn't last long as Chef Cantu tinkered with both the food and his vision for the future, which caught fire with owner, Joseph De Vito, a savvy Chicago restaurateur. Together they assembled a team of young professionals, all under the age of 30, creating a contagious vibe of excitement and energy around the edible entertainment and ingenuity on the table.

Tasting menus of 5, 10 or 18 courses are served alongside eclectic fine wines and innovative cocktails in a chic and comfortable setting. Soft lighting, clean lines and earth tones envelop the lounge and dining room setting a Zen-like stage for an unforgettable evening of Chef Cantu's Postmodern Cuisine.



Chef Cantu's Postmodern Cuisine

Since opening Moto, Chef Homaro Cantu has attracted much attention with his interpretation of Postmodern Cuisine. While Postmodern Cuisine is in its infancy in America, it seems that many diners and critics weighing-in on this new style of cuisine still view it as the Wild West of whimsy. And this is true at Moto, because the sky is the limit as Cantu stretches known scientific and gastronomic boundaries.

With the exact definition of Postmodern Cuisine still open for interpretation, it is safe to describe this culinary movement as one that reacts against earlier modernist principles. It reintroduces traditional or classical elements, typically carrying modernist styles or practices to extremes. Chef Cantu simply describes it as, "The human race has been eating the same way for hundreds and hundreds of years.

At Moto, we strip away the rules, stretch the imagination and entice guests with never before seen dishes. It's about being open-minded and having a lot of fun with food."

While multi-sensory enjoyment, including a sense of humor, is important to the Moto dining experience, whimsy is not Cantu's top priority. Cantu is a dedicated food scientist who views his kitchen as his personal laboratory. He has domestic and foreign patents pending on many inventions and works closely with DeepLabs, a team of Chicago-based product developers with backgrounds in aerospace, mechanical engineering and animation. Cantu meets with DeepLabs, conveniently located around the corner from the restaurant, on a weekly basis to strategize on what he calls his "Star War's' stuff" to make his dreams a reality. So expect some way- out-there techniques and inventions coming out of this young chef for years to come.



moto Facts

Media Contact:

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Name: Moto

Meaning:

The Japanese Kanji has many meanings. At Moto it means three: idea, taste and desire. These three meanings reflect the philosophy of a new idea bringing new pleasurable tastes which ultimately elicits desire.

Location:

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945 West Fulton Market Street
Chicago, IL 60607
Phone: 312.491.0058
Fax: 312.491.0068
Website:
www.motorestaurant.com

Opened: January 12, 2004

Concept:

Moto is a Postmodern, degustation restaurant led by restaurateur Joseph De Vito and Executive Chef Homaro Cantu. Located in Chicago's bustling Fulton Market, Moto showcases 29-year old Cantu's Postmodern Cuisine in a chic and comfortable setting. Offering a one-of-a-kind, interactive, multi-sensory dining experience, Moto strips away the rules, stretches the imagination and entices guests with never before seen dishes.

Owner:

Joseph De Vito
jdevito@motorestaurant.com

Manager / Sommelier:

Matthew Gundlach
mgundlach@motorestaurant.com

Executive Chef:

Homaro Cantu
hcantu@motorestaurant.com

Origin of his name:

Hispanic

Pastry Chef:

Ben Roche
broche@motorestaurant.com

Private Party Contact:

Matthew Gundlach
mgundlach@motorestaurant.com

Interior Design:

Soft lighting, clean lines and earth tones envelop the lounge and dining room creating a tranquil modern setting. Warm sage adorns the lounge walls, fluid white linen curtains dress the floor-to-ceiling windows and soft, deliberate lighting showcases rare art collections supplied by neighboring art galleries. The transition from lounge to adjoining dining room is effortless as the eye moves to the glowing artwork and hand-woven grass cloths covering the walls. The intimate dining room is candlelit and tables are draped with long, narrow Garnier Thiebaut linens with the wood-grain of the table exposed on either end. The feeling of natural elegance surrounds the guest and quiets the mind preparing the senses for a one-of-a-kind, interactive Postmodern dining experience.



moto Facts Continued

Rooms:

The Lounge / Bar accommodates **20**

Guests

The Dining Room accommodates **50**

Guests

The Red Room (lower level private dining room) accommodates parties of 10 to 25

Postmodern Cuisine / Menu:

Each evening, Chef Homaro Cantu presents three distinct tasting menus: 5-course (\$65), 10-course (\$100) and 18-course (gtm or grand tour moto - \$160) introducing guests to his Post-modern cuisine. Cantu manipulates the finest local and global ingredients with not-so-obvious kitchen tools such as liquid nitrogen, helium, and organic food-based inks to create dishes that are not only delicious but practically unimaginable. With courses such as the sushi cartoon, lobster with freshly squeezed orange soda, beef with braised pizza and garlic, freeze dried pina colada and doughnut soup, Cantu delivers a play on words and a dining adventure from the very first bite – which is often the edible menu.

Wine:

Taking into account the degustation format of the restaurant, wine progressions complement Chef Cantu's 5, 10 and 18-course tasting menus. The wine selections are best described as eclectic, cult wines from wine regions spanning the globe. With many bottles coming from production batches as small as 300 cases, guests drink delicious, well-kept secrets that pair perfectly with Cantu's unimaginable edible creations.

Because gems like Screaming Eagle Cabernet Sauvignon, Hollywood & Vine "2480" Chardonnay and Ferreira White Port are featured on the nightly line-up, by the glass or bottle, it's easy to ask Sommelier Matthew for another pour. However, he will be the first to tell you that you can find something enjoyable in

every glass of wine: it's just up to the guest to experiment and have a little fun along the way. And what better place to do just that than at Moto – a place where there are no rules.

Wine Progressions:

Moto's wine progressions offer exceptional value for both wine connoisseurs and those just warming up to grapes. With many coveted wine selections offered below market, guests are encouraged to explore these highly drinkable wines and to rely on Matthew to pair them according to their personal tastes. :

4 wines \$40

9 wines for \$60

14 wines for \$80

Wine progressions are meant to be fun and flexible. Guests can split progressions, request spontaneous progressions at any point during the meal or mix and match progressions.

Cocktails:

Signature cocktails are front and center in the modern lounge at Moto. Freshly squeezed fruit juices and out-of-the-box twists draw much attention. Libations such as the spider, polar bear, déjà vu and the carrot cake martini entertain guests nightly.



moto Facts Continued

Service Philosophy:

Front & Back of the House Rotation

Owner, Joseph De Vito and Executive Chef, Homaro Cantu, have assembled a team of young professionals, all under the age of 30, to create a contagious energy around the edible entertainment and ingenuity served nightly. But enthusiasm and vitality alone do not meet the impeccable service standards set at Moto. To ensure that each member of the staff is fully invested in every aspect of the restaurant, Joseph has instituted a rotational program that takes each employee through every position in the restaurant from kitchen prep to front waiter on a busy Saturday night. As he explains, "There is no substitution for knowledge, commitment and the understanding of the big picture. The rotational program prepares members of the Moto team to explain the smallest detail on the plate, anticipate the guest's every need and jump in when needed—all the while understanding the domino effect that one action can have on the entire dining experience. The result is impeccable service." Moto's rotational program has played a big role in attracting and keeping the best young talent.

Wired to the Kitchen

Taking full advantage of today's technology, the staff at Moto is literally wired to the kitchen. Each kitchen staff member wears a military ear piece and microphone which is wired to the wait staff upstairs. The upstairs wait staff relays the full order to the kitchen and alerts the kitchen staff when each course should be prepared. The result – every dish arriving on cue.

Hours of Operation:

Tuesday – Saturday

Lounge / Bar:

5pm - Midnight

Dining Room:

5pm – 11pm

Reservations:

Strongly recommended

Dress Code:

Smart Casual

Parking:

Valet parking; limited street parking available

Smoking:

Not permitted.



Joseph De Vito

Owner

When you meet Joseph De Vito it is no surprise that he is a successful restaurateur. He is impeccably dressed in designer suits and ties and is present each and every night to greet his guests at Moto, giving you a few early clues that this Chicago restaurateur is committed to detail and dedicated to his business. But don't let Joseph's sometimes austere exterior fool you, he is one creative entrepreneur who not only had the vision to predict the growth of Chicago's Fulton Market but also the imagination and guts to forge a partnership with Homaro Cantu, one of America's most daring young chefs.

Joseph is no stranger to the restaurant industry, having grown up in Chicago's "Little Italy" with family who owned and operated snack shops and restaurants. Living next door to his uncle's snack shop, his earliest memories of the business involve helping out at the store and watching his uncle run his business, a neighborhood institution. By the time he was 14, Joseph worked at Tufano's Vernon Park Tap, a family style Italian restaurant led by Joseph DiBuono, who served up legendary Italian food to boisterous, loyal customers. Working under him, De Vito learned the true meaning of hospitality and knew that he was in the industry to stay.

After graduating from high school, he followed his ambitions and immediately enrolled in restaurant management classes with an eye towards opening his own place within a year. And that's exactly what he did. At the age of 19 Joseph opened his first Chicago restaurant, then came his second when he turned 26 and by the time he reached the age of 32 he was looking for another challenge. Hungry to take on more and to continue to make his mark on the Chicago dining scene, he began envisioning his next venture.

That year De Vito met Homaro Cantu and sparks began to fly. As the two talked they set out together to blaze new trails on the Chicago dining scene. The original concept for Moto was Japanese but Cantu's Postmodern, interactive cuisine caught his attention and he recognized that they had a unique opportunity to shape the future of gastronomy. Setting the stage for such an out-of-the-box dining experience might prove

intimidating to some but De Vito relied on his creative instincts and years in the industry to make their dream a reality

He first tapped into his creative side by deciding to design the restaurant himself. While that may sound crazy to most people, it made perfect sense to him. De Vito had a clear vision for Moto. He would create a modern and chic restaurant that felt soothing and comfortable to the guest. The premise for the design was that the restaurant should feel accessible and that the design should not compete with Cantu's futuristic, whimsical cuisine. And that's exactly what he delivered.

Once De Vito designed the restaurant, his next step was to fill it with the right people. He knew that he would need a highly enthusiastic, dedicated and informed team not only to create an energetic vibe around the table but also to describe the sometimes complicated science-based cuisine. He felt that his best advocates would be young, open-minded professionals who would have the desire to learn and invest themselves in the Postmodern movement. Therefore, he handpicked a young staff, all of whom happen to be under the age of 30, and enrolled them in his very own rotational training program. In this program, each team member works every position in the restaurant from kitchen prep to front waiter on a busy Saturday night. As De Vito explains, "each member of our wait staff knows how every dish is prepared because they have made it themselves and that type of knowledge and passion is invaluable in a setting where we are serving dishes prepared with liquid nitrogen and helium every night of the week."

With numerous accolades and media coverage spanning the globe, it is fair to say that Moto was a risk worth taking for De Vito. When asked what's next, he smiles and explains that he has his eye on a space walking distance from Moto. And with his track record, De Vito could very well be pointing us in the direction of the next big thing.

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Matthew Gundlach

Manager / Sommelier

Matthew Gundlach admits that he was first attracted to hospitality industry merely for the free golf, one of the perks he enjoyed while working at several private country clubs in his hometown of Madison, Wisconsin during and after high school. But what surprised him the most was that the time he was spending off the greens and in the dining room was making a lasting impression on him. For the next ten years Matthew found himself pursuing a career in hospitality and working in the finest restaurants and clubs in Madison. These early experiences helped him develop a finely tuned wine palette and to perfect his personable style of polished service. To take his young, promising career to the next level, he moved to Chicago to work for Charlie Trotter.

During his time at Charlie Trotter's, Gundlach was an invaluable member of the wine team working alongside some of the most talented wine professionals in the country. With regular on-site and off-site wine tastings, one-on-one meetings with wine producers and ongoing training at this four-star mecca, he elevated his wine skills to the highest standards. He then met Chef Homaro Cantu through a mutual friend and was presented with the opportunity to join the Moto team to spearhead the wine and beverage program. With Postmodern cuisine just beginning to sweep the nation, Matthew saw his new position as a challenging and exciting chance of a lifetime.

As Manager and Sommelier of Moto, Gundlach rounds out the young, dynamic front-of-the-house team. Taking into account the degustation format of the restaurant, Gundlach constructs wine progressions to complement Cantu's 5, 10 and 18-course tasting menus. The wine selections are best described as eclectic, cult wines from regions spanning the globe. With many bottles coming from production batches as small as 300 cases, Gundlach introduces guests to delicious, well-kept secrets that pair perfectly with Cantu's unimaginable edible creations.

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Ben Roche

Pastry Chef

Twenty-two year old, Ben Roche discovered a fascination with science after creating Alka Seltzer “bombs” as a young boy in his best friend’s kitchen in Beaufort, South Carolina. So it seems fitting that this young, aspiring pastry chef now finds himself working alongside Postmodern culinary star, Chef Homaro Cantu. At Moto where the kitchen resembles a lab with tanks of nitrogen gas, helium and liquid nitrogen being used daily in cooking techniques, Roche’s love of science and his Johnson & Wales culinary degree are in perfect harmony.

Worlds away from Moto, Roche’s first kitchen experience was in South Carolina during high school. He took a job as a dishwasher in a bakery and found himself peering over the pots, pans and suds to watch the chemical reactions in the baking process. He was hooked. After graduating from high school, Ben enrolled in the Baking & Pastry program at Johnson & Wales. While in culinary school, he worked at a pastry shop in the Italian Village neighborhood of Providence, Rhode Island. There he learned the importance of organization and efficiency and was promoted to night manager at the age of 18. His externship led him outside the country, to Hook, England one and-a-half hours northwest of London to an intimate, boutique hotel called Tylney Hall. In England, Ben learned the art of translating innovative ideas into delicious desserts, a skill that would be invaluable to him in the years to come.

With his pastry diploma in hand, Roche wanted to return to the United States and had his sights set on Chicago and Charlie Trotter’s. After a short stint in Houston, he was given a two-day trial period to prove himself at Trotter’s and that he did. He was brought on as a baker and after 8 months was promoted to the pastry team. His experience at Charlie Trotter’s prepared him for the demands that he would face at Moto. Roche met Chef Cantu through a mutual friend and the two science-minded chefs hit it off immediately. The rest is history.

Now side-by-side in the kitchen at Moto, the two chefs rely on each other to make their zany ideas a reality. Every Tuesday they sit down with the rest of the culinary crew to throw out pie-in-the-sky menu ideas and to plot scientific ways of achieving them. Some of the latest winners to make it to the plate are a yuzu sphere and doughnut soup. As Roche explains, “Working in the kitchen at Moto is all about a new way of thinking. Many of the traditional principles of a dish are stripped away and inspiration comes from places other than cookbooks such as movies and art. Chef Cantu inspires us all to alter our thinking and stretch our imaginations.”

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