

# Chef de Cuisine Brian Piasecki California Grill, Disney's Contemporary Resort

Brian Piasecki heads the culinary team at California Grill, located atop Disney's Contemporary Resort.

His passion for cooking started early, watching his mother as she prepared stews, roasts, chicken and dumplings and other comfort food for the family in Toledo, Ohio. At 15, he took a job in a local restaurant. "I felt so at home in the kitchen," he says. "I never really considered another career."

After high school, Piasecki entered Owens Technical College in Toledo to work toward an associates' degree in foodservice management. In 1991, at the age of 20, he left Ohio to join Disney's Culinary Apprenticeship program at Epcot where he worked in The Coral Reef, Land Grill Room, Farmer's Market and Odyssey restaurants. In 1992 he moved to Disney's Yacht & Beach Club Resort where he continued to apprentice in the restaurant and banquet kitchens.

Piasecki's on-the-job training next took him to Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa before he was elevated to restaurant chef at Disney's All-Star Sports Resort in 1994. In 1996 he moved to the ESPN Club at Disney's BoardWalk Resort as restaurant chef and was named head chef for the restaurant in 1997.

In May 1999, Piasecki became the chef at Coral Reef restaurant in Epcot's Living Seas pavilion where he not only cooked, but also managed the receiving, culinary, bakery/pastry and stewarding departments. His Coral Reef experience further ingrained his growing appreciation of freshness, fully developed flavors and seasonal products.

From The Coral Reef, Piasecki traveled to World Showcase and the Canada pavilion as chef for Le Cellier Steakhouse in 2001.

Piasecki took the helm in 2007 at Jiko—The Cooking Place as Chef de Cuisine. Jiko means "cooking place" in Swahili, and the restaurant's masterful dishes pay homage to the African theme. Traveling to South Africa to explore the cuisine, wine, and culture of the people while cooking with award-winning South African chefs was a career highlight.

In January of 2009, Piasecki was named the Chef de Cuisine of the California Grill at Disney's Contemporary Resort. Located on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor of the Resort the onstage, market-inspired kitchen boasts breathtaking views of the Magic Kingdom, Seven Seas Lagoon and nightly fireworks. The menu is creative, seasonal, sophisticated and fun - a true market menu.