

## Donald Wressell Executive Pastry Chef

Growing up in Issaquah, Washington, Donald Wressell credits much of his cooking career to his grandmother. When he was seven, the duo would watch *The Galloping Gourmet* and entranced by the flipping, stirring, and sautéing, Wressell decided to become a chef.

As a young adult, he enrolled in the Washington State Chef Association Culinary program and continued to garner pastry expertise through positions at the Westin Hotel in Seattle, Watergate Pastry in Washington D.C. where he worked with Jean-Louis Palladin and the Breakers Hotel Sky Room in Long Beach, California.

He worked at the Four Seasons in Philadelphia in 1986 and remembers this as a formative time working with Executive Chef Jean-Marie Lacroix “who was brilliant with food and people.” In 1987, Wressell was named Executive Pastry Chef at the Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills. It was here that he wooed the hotel’s celebrity clientele with the sweet creations of his hands and humor. While at the Four Seasons, Wressell made the City of Beverly Hills’ 75th Anniversary cake, a gâteau enjoyed by 10,000 people. He continued to mix, frost and pipe at the hotel for 19 years. In 2015, he was invited to make the cake for Beverly Hills’ 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, this time for 15,000 people. The celebration took place April 27, 2014.

In 2006, Wressell joined San Francisco Bay Area based Guittard Chocolate Company as the Corporate Pastry Chef. “I have used Guittard chocolate both professionally and personally and I was thrilled at the opportunity to be the pastry chef for the oldest family run chocolate company in the U.S. I have always loved working with chocolate; it’s an amazing food with magical qualities. What other food can be made into decorative shapes and visual amusements that not only tastes good but has incredible food value?”

Wressell’s accolades are many. He was awarded the Distinguished Visiting Chef Award 2016 by Johnson & Wales. In 1998 and 1999, he was named one of the Top Ten Pastry Chefs by *Chocolatier Pastry Art & Design* magazine and in 2003 he was named Southern California’s Restaurant Writers Pastry Chef of the Year. He is the recipient of both Silver and Gold medals in the Grand Salon Culinaire and the winner and in 1995 won the opportunity to go to the Les Masters du Chocolate competition. His pastry pedigree also includes “Pastry Chef of the Year” by the Organizing Committee of the 2005 National Pastry Team Championships as well as recognition from the White House for his work with the US Pastry Team.

Wressell's experience in domestic and international pastry competitions is unparalleled. As team captain during the 2011 National Pastry Team Championship, his team was awarded a Gold medal and First Place in Degustation. In 2012 as team captain at the World Pastry Championship, his team was awarded the Silver medal and First Place in Degustation. In addition, Wressell has represented Team USA seven times at the Coupe du Monde de la Pâtisserie, as a competitor, team captain, coach, manager and/or on the jury. He competed for the first time in 1993; in 1995 he was Team Captain leading the USA to a Bronze (the first medal won by Team USA at that time). In 1999, he was Coach/Manager with USA winning the Bronze. In 2001, he was Coach/Manager when the team won its first (and only) Gold medal to date. In 2003, he was Chairman/Coach/Manager/Judge with Team USA placing 4th. In 2005, he was Team Captain winning the Bronze. Most recently, in 2015, he was Coach/Manager winning the Bronze.

He has also made many television appearances: The Challenge Series; Coupe Du Monde; and Pastry Team Championship documentaries on the Food Network, ET, Roseanne Barr Show, Access Hollywood, Good Morning America and Chuck Henry's Travel Cafe.

Today, Wressell continues to develop recipes using Guittard Chocolate and does speaking engagements, conducts demonstrations, participates in international competitions and leads his signature "Guest Chef Series" classes at the Guittard Chocolate Studio in Los Angeles. When he's not in the pastry or demo kitchen or masterminding the design and production of a larger-than-life birthday cake, he derives great pleasure in his own kitchen and woodworking workshop.

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