

Executive Chef Nickolas Martinez is Newest Lexus Culinary Master

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PLANO, Texas (October, 21, 2020) The Lexus Culinary Masters program welcomes acclaimed chef Nickolas Martinez to its impressive roster featuring a number of the country's most talented chefs, restaurateurs, and culinary personalities. As the latest addition to the Culinary Masters' team, Martinez will serve as ambassador to the brand to help craft amazing experiences and amplify Lexus core values of human-centered craft, innovation, curiosity and hospitality. He will partner with Lexus on marketing initiatives and food and wine events.

Since 2018, Martinez has served as executive chef at INTERSECT BY LEXUS-NYC, a creative space dedicated to the ethos of the Lexus lifestyle, and home to a unique dining experience. He works with chefs from around the world to bring their world-class, international cuisine to life as part of INTERSECT's Restaurant-in-Residence program, which rotates every four to six months. Past Restaurant-in-Residences include Paris' Frenchie, 040 of Santiago, Mishiguene of Buenos Aires, and most recently, O Pedro of Mumbai.

"Through his role at INTERSECT BY LEXUS – NYC, we see firsthand the dedication Chef Nickolas has to pursuing perfection in his craft, making him a welcome addition to the Lexus Culinary Masters team," says Lisa Materazzo, Lexus vice president of marketing. "We are excited to share his incredible talents and culinary contributions with the entire Lexus community."

Over his career, Martinez has developed a unique culinary identity from his experiences, infusing his Midwestern roots with his passion for French culinary methods. After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America in 2003, he honed his skills under Alain Ducasse at the Essex House and later joined the opening team at L'Atelier du Joel Robuchon at the Four Seasons and helped them earn its second Michelin Star in 2012. Afterwards, he opened a new restaurant concept focusing on local farms and ingredients at Foragers in Chelsea, where he gained recognition as Executive Chef in the Michelin guide for four consecutive years from 2013 to 2016.

"I look forward to deepening my relationship with Lexus, and am honored to join this esteemed group of hand-picked chefs and working alongside them in the future," Martinez added.

Martinez is already working closely with the brand and is featured in the newly released Lexus global digital cookbook, *Culinary Perspectives, Vol. 2: A Cross-Cultural Journey in Taste*, where he shares his recipe for heirloom tomato salad.

The current group of Lexus Culinary Masters includes James Beard Award-winning chefs Michelle Bernstein, Stephanie Izard, Ludo Lefebvre, and Jon Shook and Vinny Dotolo; Michelin star awarded chefs such as the legendary Daniel Boulud, Dominique Crenn, and Carlo Mirarchi; celebrated sommelier Carlton McCoy, and the "father of Southern Cuisine" Dean Fearing.