



**EAT EXPERT**

# WELL-SEASONED

**Bankers Hill Bar + Restaurant's  
New Chef de Cuisine Shares His Vision**

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**THE EXPERT**  
**TYLER NOLLENBERGER**  
Chef de Cuisine, Bankers  
Hill Bar + Restaurant

**Favorite Childhood Memory:**  
Eating his mother's home  
cooked meals

Bankers Hill Bar + Restaurant, well-known among the local San Diego crowd for its industrial architecture and customer-favorite Bankers Hill Burger and Truffle Fries, has welcomed a new chef among its ranks—Tyler Nollenberger. Originally beginning his food-industry career as a busboy to get his food into the door of the world of cooking, Nollenberger joined Bankers Hill as Chef de Cuisine after six years at Market Restaurant + Bar, Bankers Hill upscale sister restaurant in Del Mar, under mentor and three-time James Beard nominee, Carl Schroeder.

Talking with Nollenberger, his passion for food and seasonal ingredients becomes apparent. An advocate of working your way up and finding innovative ways to work with unique ingredients, Nollenberger aims to transform Bankers Hill into a neighborhood restaurant with a creative menu and satisfying food.



"I'm always looking for the great next seasonal item, the cross-breed fruits and vegetables that no one has ever seen before."

—TYLER NOLLENBERGER

**BANKERS HILL BAR + RESTAURANT**  
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## Q: TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AS A CHEF.

**Tyler Nollenberger:** I started working in restaurants in Santa Cruz when I was 16. I was a busboy, and at 18, I was a server. At 20, I went to culinary school and jumped into cooking right after that. My cooking wages paid for culinary school! I cooked around the Santa Cruz area for a few years and moved to San Diego, where I eventually landed at Market for six years, where I worked my way up to a Sous Chef. Then, this opportunity at Bankers Hill came up.



**Q:** What is one rule you learned in culinary school that every home cook should know?

**TN:** Season as you go, and don't follow recipes. Let your palate guide you.

**Q:** What inspires your dishes and your style?

**TN:** A lot of my inspiration comes from past training, particularly at Market [Restaurant + Bar in Del Mar], but my biggest source of inspiration comes from an understanding of what works, what's available and seasonal components. When you combine seasonal ingredients and flavor profiles, that's my inspiration and that's what makes good food.

The beauty of our location [in San Diego] is the abundance of produce, the access to Baja season, the Pacific Northwest... it never ends. I'm always looking for the great next seasonal item, the cross-breed fruits and vegetables that no one has ever seen before. I want to bring these unique ingredients to people at Bankers Hill.

**Q:** What's your mission and vision for Bankers Hill?

**TN:** We are a neighborhood restaurant working to feed people substantial meals—to feed people in a rustic way and style. I aim to satiate people. I

think that we are ultimately creating cohesive dishes—it doesn't have to be a particular genre or a particular style of food. It's about food that tastes good. That's cool about what we're doing here at Bankers Hill.

**Q:** What do you bring to Bankers Hill that's unique?

**TN:** I bring energy, focus and passion. Those things create a spark with everybody, especially the kitchen staff. If they are inspired, then they feel like we're doing something special, which I think we are. That creates passion with them. Being passionate about what you're doing goes a long way. It translates into the quality and taste of your food.

**Q:** What is it like working with the award-nominated Carl Schroeder? Is it madness? Fun? Give us the scoop!

**TN:** At this point in my career, I have worked with a lot of chefs. Chef Schroeder has been the one that I have learned the most from. He has been my mentor, and we work really well together. I worked for him at Market in Del Mar for six years, and I have a ton of respect for him as a chef and owner working the trenches, especially at the level he is at. He always demanded extremely high standards. I saw the




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**INTRODUCING BANKERS HILL BAR + RESTAURANT'S NEW BAR MANAGER ZACK GRAY:**

→ Gray has infused Bankers Hill cocktail menu with herbal and fruit-forward beverages, including two signature cocktails featuring Spirit Works Sloe Gin, a versatile, acidic liquor rarely seen on cocktail lineups.

→ Gray's sipping recommendation? Gin-based Bees of Bennett Valley.

→ Bankers Hill patrons can find Zack behind the bar Wednesday-Saturday evenings and during Sunday Brunch.



progression of Market throughout the years, and it always continues to get better. He has the ability to push every cook to their highest potential.

**Q: When you're not cooking in your own kitchen, what are some spots you like to grab food around SD?**

**TN:** Given my hours, I usually eat at late-night places, so I like to dine anywhere that serves until midnight or later. I like going to Convoy to try Yakitori. Around San Diego, I also like Starlite or Izakaya Masa.

**Q: What excites you about your job?**

**TN:** My favorite thing about my job is the challenge. I have created a saying: “Embrace the challenge.” You can't get mad every time something goes wrong; you have to figure out how to make it right. I also love building a team, finding cooks that believe in what we're doing and want to be a part of it.

**Q: What is your favorite dish to cook? (Both on and off the menu!)**

**TN:** That's one of my favorite things about cooking – I never make the same thing twice. Part of the beauty of living in San Diego is the access to so much great produce and seafood. Some days I'll wake up and say, “I want to make a big salad today.” So I'll go to Chino Farms' vegetable stand at Rancho Santa

Fe (they have some of the most amazing produce anywhere) and grab some local yellowtail from the fish market. I'll take those ingredients and just see where it ends up.

**Q: Tell me about one of your favorite food memories.**

**TN:** I really didn't like eating out as a kid. I always wanted to stay home and eat because my favorite meals were the ones my mom made. It was very simple food, but always hit the spot. She used to make this dish she called brown rice supreme. It was brown rice, melted cheese, salsa and green onions. Looking back now, I think it's funny that I liked it so much!

**Q: Many chefs cook with music. Do you? What's your cooking soundtrack, if so?**

**TN:** I like to cook with music. The music depends on the mood that I'm in. If it's creative, it is probably opera or Frank Sinatra. If we're trying to pull everything together and the pace in the kitchen is fast, it's rock. If we're in good shape, then we're listening to old school hip-hop.

**Q: The one kitchen tool you couldn't live without?**

**TN:** My knife is the only tool I need. ■

**MENU MUST-HAVES**

→ Soft Shell Crab  
Lettuce Wraps  
Green Papaya-Bok Choy Slaw,  
Lemongrass  
Vinaigrette, Chili  
Glaze  
→ BBQ Pork Belly  
Sopas  
Jicama Watermelon  
Salsa, Black Bean  
Pures, Serrano Chilis  
→ Prima Flatiron  
Steak  
Baked Chili Relleno,  
Sweet Pepper Polenta,  
Oaxaca Cheese,  
Broccolini

**SELECT SIPS:**

→ Bees of Bennett  
Valley  
Fennel Pollen Infused  
Gin, Honey, Lemon,  
Lavender Bitters  
→ Hemingwayish:  
Rum, Cocchi Rosa,  
Maraschino Liqueur,  
Absinthe, Orange  
Bitters  
→ Sucker Punch:  
Rum, Oloa Saccharum,  
Spices, Black Tea,  
Vanilla Bean, Citrus,  
Clarified Milk