

**NICHOLAS FORTE**  
CLUB COUPE DU MONDE DE LA PÂTISSERIE TEAM USA  
NATIONAL SELECTION 2025 - TASTING CANDIDATE

**BIOGRAPHY**

Chef Nicholas Forte didn't follow the traditional path to pastry. Before baking pate a choux or tempering chocolate, he was studying kinesiology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. But it didn't take long for him to realize that the kitchen — not the classroom — was where he belonged.

"I thought I'd be working in sports medicine," he said in a Life Is a Gamble podcast episode, "but I kept getting drawn back to pastry. It's where my creativity made sense."

That instinct led him to the French Pastry School in Chicago, where he enrolled in the L'Art de la Patisserie program. There, he trained under some of the most celebrated pastry figures in the world — chefs Sebastien Canonne, M.O.F., Jacquy Pfeiffer, Patrice Caillot, Jonathan Dendauw, En-Ming Hsu and others. It was an immersive education in everything from laminated doughs to sugar showpieces, giving Forte both the technical foundation and artistic vision to thrive in the field.

After graduating with honors, he walked straight into a dream job at Joel Robuchon's three-Michelin-starred restaurant in Las Vegas.

"I literally just walked in and asked if they needed help," he recalled. "And they said yes. That job changed my life."

There, he fine-tuned his skills in plated desserts, mignardises and elegant presentation — skills he carried with him through increasingly senior roles in luxury kitchens, including Encore Boston Harbor, Brezza, Bar Zazu and Jean-Marie Aubeine Chocolatier, where he supervised production of bonbons, bars and fine confections.

By 2021, Forte had taken the helm as corporate pastry chef for Tao Group Hospitality on the West Coast, a position that now sees him overseeing pastry operations for a dozen properties across California and Nevada. From conceptualizing dessert menus and developing recipes to mentoring chefs and collaborating on global rollouts, his days are anything but routine.

"I'm not here just to make things look pretty," he told Pastry Arts Magazine. "Flavor is always the priority. If it doesn't taste amazing, it doesn't matter how perfect the quenelle is."

That balance of flavor and finesse is evident in many of his creations — like his Viennetta-inspired vanilla dessert for LAVO West Hollywood, which reimagines a childhood treat as a multi-textural showstopper.

"Vanilla is the star of the show in so many of my desserts," he said. "It's the base that lets everything else shine."

His approach is nostalgic but refined, blending childhood memories with classical training. That ethos carries over into his personal life, too. When his son turned 1, Forte designed a whimsical Bluey-themed cake that made headlines on Bluey.tv.

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“It’s always been a dream of mine to make my son’s first birthday cake,” he said. “I knew I had to do something wild for it!”

In addition to his technical mastery and creativity, Forte is known for his leadership style. At Tao, he’s not just developing menus — he’s building teams.

“I try to create kitchens where young chefs feel supported and inspired. I’ve had great mentors, and now I want to be that for someone else.”

Whether he’s sculpting chocolate, refining a sorbet base or reinventing a classic dessert, Chef Nicholas Forte remains a driving force in the next generation of American pastry. With roots in Las Vegas and inspiration from around the world, his work continues to celebrate precision, playfulness and passion.

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