

The Ember & Oak Kitchen

Restaurant Profile Document

Executive Summary

The Ember & Oak Kitchen is a contemporary farm-to-table restaurant specializing in wood-fired cuisine with a focus on seasonal ingredients and sustainable practices. Located in the heart of Portland's Pearl District, the establishment combines rustic elegance with modern culinary innovation.

Founder Background

Maria Elena Santiago

Founder & Executive Chef

Maria Elena Santiago founded The Ember & Oak Kitchen in March 2019 after a distinguished 15-year career in culinary arts. Born in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to a Mexican-American family, Maria grew up immersed in the traditions of southwestern cooking, learning from her grandmother who operated a small taqueria for over 30 years.

Educational Background: - Le Cordon Bleu, Paris, France (2006-2007) - Grand Diplôme in Culinary Arts - Cornell University School of Hotel Administration (2002-2006) - BS in Hotel Administration - Specialty training in wood-fired cooking techniques at Osteria Francescana, Modena, Italy (2008)

Professional Experience: - Sous Chef, Canlis Restaurant, Seattle (2008-2011) - Head Chef, Verde Kitchen, San Francisco (2011-2015) - Executive Chef, Harvest Moon Bistro, Portland (2015-2019) - Consulting Chef for various farm-to-table establishments (2017-2019)

Awards & Recognition: - James Beard Foundation Rising Star Chef Semifinalist (2014) - Food & Wine "Best New Chef" Finalist (2016) - Portland Monthly "Chef of the Year" (2018)

Maria's vision for The Ember & Oak Kitchen emerged from her belief that cooking with fire connects us to our culinary roots while allowing for extraordinary creativity. She invested \$850,000 of personal savings and secured an additional \$1.2 million through private investors who shared her vision for sustainable, community-focused dining.

Key Partners

David Chen - Co-Founder & General Manager Former restaurant operations director with 20 years of hospitality experience. David manages day-to-day operations, staff training, and customer experience initiatives.

Sophie Laurent - Beverage Director & Sommelier Advanced Sommelier certified through the Court of Master Sommeliers. Sophie curated an award-winning wine program featuring biodynamic and natural wines from small producers.

Location Details

Primary Address

The Ember & Oak Kitchen 342 NW 11th Avenue Portland, Oregon 97209 United States

Neighborhood: Pearl District **Building Type:** Historic converted warehouse (originally built 1912) **Square Footage:** 4,500 sq ft total - Dining Area: 2,800 sq ft (seats 85 guests) - Kitchen: 1,200 sq ft - Private Dining Room: 500 sq ft (seats 16 guests)

Geographical Context

Located in Portland's vibrant Pearl District, the restaurant sits at the intersection of the city's art scene and culinary innovation. The neighborhood features: - Walking distance to Powell's City of Books (0.3 miles) - Adjacent to Portland Saturday Market location - 5 minutes from Union Station - Surrounded by 12+ art galleries - Part of the Brewery Blocks development area

Accessibility

- Street-level entrance with ADA-compliant ramp
- Accessible restrooms on main floor
- Elevator access to private dining room

- Reserved parking arrangements with nearby garage (200 NW 10th Avenue)
- Public transit: Portland Streetcar (NW 11th & Glisan stop - 2 blocks)

Atmosphere & Design

The interior design, created by local firm Cascadia Design Studio, features: - Exposed brick walls from the original 1912 warehouse - Custom 18-foot live-edge oak bar made from a single Oregon white oak - Open kitchen with a centerpiece Argentine-style wood-fired grill - Edison bulb pendant lighting with dimmer controls - Reclaimed wood tables from demolished Portland buildings - Living plant wall with herbs used in daily service (maintained weekly) - Vintage industrial elements mixed with contemporary comfort - Acoustic panels disguised as artwork to control noise levels

Menu Philosophy & Offerings

Culinary Approach

The Ember & Oak Kitchen's menu changes with the seasons, with complete menu rotations occurring four times per year (March, June, September, December). Daily specials feature ingredients at their peak, sourced from relationships with 23 local farms and foragers within a 150-mile radius.

Current Menu (Fall/Winter 2024-2025)

STARTERS

Wood-Fired Oysters | \$18 Six Kusshi oysters, smoked chili butter, crispy shallots, lemon *Oysters from Stellar Bay Shellfish, Cortes Island, BC*

Ember-Roasted Beet Salad | \$15 Mixed heirloom beets, whipped goat cheese, candied hazelnuts, arugula, apple cider vinaigrette *Beets from Gathering Together Farm, Philomath, OR*

Duck Liver Mousse | \$16 Wood-grilled sourdough, pickled cherries, Maldon salt, micro greens *Duck liver from Stony Oaks Farm, St. Paul, OR*

Grilled Spanish Octopus | \$22 Smoked paprika, fingerling potatoes, preserved lemon, parsley oil *Octopus sourced through sustainable fisheries, Spain*

Autumn Mushroom Toast | \$14 Wild mushroom medley, truffle cream, fried egg, chive oil, country bread *Mushrooms foraged locally by Pacific Northwest Foragers Co-op*

MAINS

Wood-Fired Heritage Pork Chop | \$38 14 oz bone-in chop, apple-fennel mostarda, roasted delicata squash, sage jus *Heritage pork from Pine Hollow Farm, Corbett, OR*

Grilled Oregon Steelhead | \$36 Wild steelhead, brown butter Brussels sprouts, roasted grapes, hazelnut gremolata *Steelhead from Nehalem River, sustainably caught*

Ember-Roasted Half Chicken | \$32 Mary's free-range chicken, root vegetable hash, natural jus, herb oil *Chicken from Mary's Free Range Chicken, Sanger, CA*

Dry-Aged Ribeye | \$58 16 oz 45-day dry-aged ribeye, ember-roasted garlic, seasonal vegetables, red wine reduction *Beef from Carman Ranch, Wallowa, OR - grass-fed and finished*

Vegetable Wellington | \$28 Seasonal vegetables en croute, mushroom duxelles, port wine reduction, roasted carrots *All vegetables from Sauvie Island Organics*

Wood-Fired Lamb Rack | \$44 Colorado lamb, mint-pistachio pesto, smoked eggplant, pomegranate molasses *Lamb from Superior Farms, Colorado*

SIDES (All \$9)

- Ember-Roasted Brussels Sprouts with bacon and balsamic
- Creamy Polenta with Rogue Creamery blue cheese
- Charred Broccolini with chili flakes and lemon
- Duck Fat Potatoes with rosemary and sea salt
- Seasonal Vegetables with herb butter

DESSERTS

Basque Burnt Cheesecake | \$12 Traditional Spanish-style cheesecake, seasonal fruit compote, whipped cream

Wood-Fired Apple Crisp | \$11 Granny Smith apples, oat crumble, vanilla bean ice cream, caramel sauce

Chocolate Ember Cake | \$13 Dark chocolate cake with smoked salt, espresso cream, candied hazelnuts

Seasonal Panna Cotta | \$10 Rotating flavors, fresh berries, mint

Artisan Cheese Plate | \$18 Three local cheeses, house crackers, seasonal preserves, marcona almonds *Cheeses from Rogue Creamery, Face Rock Creamery, and Briar Rose Creamery*

Beverage Program

Wine List: 180 selections emphasizing Oregon, California, and Pacific Northwest wines, with strong representation of biodynamic and natural wines. Wine list changes quarterly with 20-30 new additions each season.

Craft Cocktails: \$12-16 - Signature cocktails featuring house-made syrups, bitters, and infusions - Seasonal rotating menu (8 cocktails) - Classic cocktails with modern twists

Beer Program: - 12 rotating taps featuring local breweries - 25 bottled craft beers - Emphasis on Oregon and Pacific Northwest producers

Non-Alcoholic Options: - House-made sodas and shrubs - Fresh-pressed juices - Specialty coffee program featuring Stumptown Coffee Roasters

Operational Policies

Hours of Operation

Dinner Service: - Tuesday - Thursday: 5:00 PM - 10:00 PM - Friday - Saturday: 5:00 PM - 11:00 PM - Sunday: 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM - Monday: Closed

Weekend Brunch (Added September 2023): - Saturday - Sunday: 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Private Events: - Available Monday evenings and select daytime hours - Private dining room available during regular service hours

Reservation Policy

- Reservations accepted up to 60 days in advance via OpenTable, phone, or website
- Walk-ins welcome, bar seating available on first-come basis
- Parties of 7+ require credit card to hold reservation
- Cancellation policy: 24-hour notice required or \$25 per person fee
- No-show policy: \$50 per person charge
- Large parties (8-16): Private dining room recommended, may require prix fixe menu

Dress Code

Smart casual. While we don't require jackets, we ask guests to avoid: - Athletic wear (gym clothes, athletic shorts) - Flip-flops or beach sandals - Excessively torn or soiled clothing

Dietary Accommodations

The Ember & Oak Kitchen accommodates various dietary needs with advance notice: - Vegetarian and vegan options available on all menus - Gluten-free modifications possible for most dishes - Nut allergy protocols in place - 48-hour notice requested for complex dietary restrictions - Chef's vegan tasting menu available with 24-hour notice

Children Policy

- Children of all ages welcome
- High chairs and booster seats available
- Children's portions available for select menu items (\$14-18)
- Coloring materials provided upon request
- We ask parents to be mindful of other diners during busy service

Service Standards

Staff Training: - All servers complete 40-hour training program before serving guests - Quarterly wine education seminars with Sophie Laurent - Monthly ingredient farm visits for front-of-house staff - Annual harassment prevention training - Food safety certification required for all staff

Service Philosophy: - Warm, knowledgeable hospitality without pretension - Tables checked within 2 minutes of seating - Entrees served within 35 minutes of order placement - Staff empowered to resolve guest concerns immediately - Feedback encouraged through comment cards and digital surveys

Tipping and Gratuity

- Service charge of 20% automatically added to parties of 6 or more
- Tip pooling system: 70% to service staff, 30% to support staff
- Living wage commitment: All staff earn minimum \$18/hour before tips
- Full-time employees receive benefits package

Sustainability & Sourcing

Environmental Commitments

Farm Partnerships: The restaurant maintains direct relationships with 23 local farms and producers:

Primary Produce Partners: - Gathering Together Farm (Philomath, OR) - vegetables - Sauvie Island Organics (Portland, OR) - mixed vegetables and herbs - Mt. Hood Organic Farms (Hood River, OR) - stone fruits and berries - Full Cellar Farm (Corbett, OR) - specialty vegetables

Protein Sources: - Carman Ranch (Wallowa, OR) - grass-fed beef - Pine Hollow Farm (Corbett, OR) - heritage pork - Stony Oaks Farm (St. Paul, OR) - duck and poultry - Nehalem Bay Sustainable Fishing (Nehalem, OR) - seafood

Waste Reduction: - Composting partnership with Portland Composts! (diverting 85% of waste) - Food waste tracked daily, with goal of <5% waste by 2026 - Seafood scraps provided to local community garden programs - Rendered fats donated to bio-diesel programs

Energy & Water: - LED lighting throughout (installed 2021) - Low-flow water fixtures reducing consumption by 30% - Energy Star certified equipment in kitchen - Plans for solar panel installation (2026)

Sourcing Standards: - Minimum 75% of ingredients sourced within 150 miles (current: 78%) - 100% of coffee, tea, and chocolate certified fair trade - All seafood vetted through Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch - Beef and pork from exclusively pasture-raised, hormone-free sources

Financial Performance

Business Model

Pricing Strategy: Mid-to-high range fine casual - Average check per person: \$65-85 (including beverages) - Wine program contributes 28% of revenue - Food cost target: 32-35% - Labor cost: 33-35% of revenue

Revenue Streams

Primary Revenue (2024 Projected): - Dinner service: \$2.1 million (78%) - Weekend brunch: \$320,000 (12%) - Private events: \$180,000 (7%) - Retail (merchandise, gift cards): \$80,000 (3%)

Total Projected Revenue (2024): \$2.68 million **Projected Net Profit Margin:** 8-10%

Covers & Capacity

- Average covers per service: 110-130
- Annual covers: Approximately 32,000
- Peak season: September-November, May-June
- Slower season: January-February (offset by Restaurant Week participation)

Investment & Funding

Initial Investment (2019): \$2.05 million - Buildout and design: \$850,000 - Equipment: \$480,000 - Initial inventory: \$120,000 - Working capital: \$400,000 - Licenses and permits: \$45,000 - Marketing and pre-opening: \$75,000 - Contingency: \$80,000

Current Ownership Structure: - Maria Elena Santiago: 55% - Private investors (4 individuals): 40% - David Chen: 5%

Marketing & Community Engagement

Brand Positioning

The Ember & Oak Kitchen positions itself as Portland's premier wood-fired dining destination, emphasizing:
- Authentic cooking technique (wood-fired preparation)
- Hyper-local sourcing and farmer relationships
- Sustainable, ethical food practices
- Accessible fine dining without pretension

Marketing Channels

Digital Presence: - Website: theemberandoak.com (rebuilt 2023, mobile-optimized) - Instagram: @emberandoakpdx (18,500 followers) - Facebook: 8,200 followers - Email newsletter: 6,800 subscribers, sent bi-weekly - Google Business Profile: 4.6 stars (340 reviews) - Yelp: 4.5 stars (280 reviews)

Traditional Marketing: - Print advertising in Portland Monthly (quarterly) - Partnership with Travel Portland for tourist marketing - Food blogger and influencer partnerships (10-12 annually) - Local food festival participation

Public Relations: - Featured in Bon Appétit (October 2020) - Oregonian dining review (4 stars, 2019) - Eater Portland multiple features - Portland Monthly "Top 25 Restaurants" (2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024)

Community Involvement

Charitable Initiatives: - Monthly partnership dinners benefiting local nonprofits (5% of evening's sales donated) - Annual "Empty Bowls" event supporting Portland Homeless Family Solutions - Cooking classes for at-risk youth through Janus Youth Programs - Food donations to Portland Rescue Mission (averaging \$800/month value)

Industry Involvement: - Maria serves on Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association board - Mentorship program: hosting culinary students from local schools - Annual scholarship fund for culinary education (\$5,000 awarded annually) - Participation in Portland Indie Wine Festival

Staff Development: - Staff volunteer day quarterly (paid time) - Education stipends for continuing education - Partnerships with wine distributors for staff training - Farm visit days for team building and education

Team Structure

Management Team

Maria Elena Santiago - Founder & Executive Chef **David Chen** - General Manager & Co-Founder **Sophie Laurent** - Beverage Director & Sommelier **James Wu** - Sous Chef **Rachel Martinez** - Pastry Chef **Elena Popov** - Front of House Manager **Marcus Thompson** - Private Events Coordinator

Staff Composition (Total: 38 employees)

Kitchen Staff (18): - 1 Executive Chef - 1 Sous Chef - 1 Pastry Chef - 3 Line Cooks - 2 Prep Cooks - 1 Butcher/Fish Preparation - 2 Dishwashers - 7 Additional part-time kitchen staff

Front of House (20): - 1 General Manager - 1 Beverage Director - 1 FOH Manager - 1 Private Events Coordinator - 8 Servers - 3 Bartenders - 5 Server Assistants/Bussers

Employee Benefits

Full-Time Employees (30+ hours/week): - Health insurance (company pays 70% of premiums) - Dental and vision insurance available - 401(k) with 3% company match after 1 year - Paid time off: 10 days year one, increasing to 15 days year three - 6 paid holidays - Employee meal during shift - 30% discount when dining as guest - Professional development stipend: \$500/year

Part-Time Employees: - Employee meal during shift - 30% dining discount - Opportunity to buy into health insurance - Access to tip pool

Culture & Values

Core Values: 1. Hospitality First - Every guest leaves happier than they arrived 2. Quality Without Compromise - Excellence in every detail 3. Sustainable Stewardship - Responsibility to community and planet 4. Growth Mindset - Continuous learning and improvement 5. Team Unity - Success through collaboration

Recognition Programs: - Monthly "Team Member Spotlight" - Quarterly performance bonuses for managers - Annual awards dinner celebrating team achievements - Peer recognition program ("Oak Leaf Awards")

Future Plans & Expansion Strategy

Short-Term Goals (2025-2026)

Menu Innovation: - Launch of chef's counter experience (6 seats, \$125 prix fixe) - Quarterly collaborative dinners with visiting chefs - Expansion of weekend brunch to include Friday - Development of takeout program for select items

Facility Improvements: - Installation of rooftop solar panels (Q2 2025) - \$85,000 investment - Renovation of private dining room with upgraded AV system (Q4 2025) - Addition of seasonal outdoor patio seating (18 seats, Q1 2026) - Kitchen equipment upgrades: new blast chiller and additional lowboy refrigeration

Technology Integration: - Implementation of comprehensive POS system upgrade (Toast system) - Launch of mobile app for reservations and ordering - Enhanced website with online gift card sales and merchandise - Digital wine list with iPad integration

Staff Development: - Expansion of culinary internship program (2 to 4 interns) - Partnership with local culinary school for extern placements - Advanced sommelier certification support for two team members - Leadership development program for management track employees

Mid-Term Goals (2027-2029)

Second Location: - Exploration of second Portland-area location (Lake Oswego or West Hills) - Smaller format: 50-60 seats - Similar concept with neighborhood focus - Target opening: Q4 2027 - Estimated investment: \$1.5 million

Product Line Development: - Launch of retail product line (Q1 2028) - House-made hot sauces and condiments - Spice blends - Branded merchandise (aprons, cutting boards, cookbooks) - Partnership with local retailers for distribution - Online sales through website - Projected first-year revenue: \$150,000

Enhanced Beverage Program: - Application for distillery license for house spirits (2028) - Barrel-aging program for custom cocktails - Expanded wine cellar for vintage program - Private wine locker program for regular guests

Publishing: - The Ember & Oak Kitchen cookbook (anticipated 2028) - Partnership with regional publisher - Focus on wood-fired cooking at home - Interactive digital companion with video tutorials

Long-Term Vision (2030+)

Brand Expansion: - Exploration of third location in Seattle or Vancouver, BC - Potential franchise or licensing model for signature concepts - Consulting services for restaurant development - Television or streaming content development

Culinary Education Center: - Dedicated cooking school space (separate facility) - Public cooking classes and workshops - Professional development programs - Wood-fired cooking certification program

Sustainability Leadership: - Achievement of zero-waste operation - Development of on-site garden/farm collaboration - Industry white papers on sustainable practices - Speaking engagements and consulting on restaurant sustainability

Farm Partnerships: - Investment in partner farm operations - Exclusive growing contracts for heritage varieties - Potential acquisition of small farm for direct sourcing - Agritourism experiences for guests

Financial Projections

Revenue Growth Targets: - 2025: \$2.85 million (6.3% growth) - 2026: \$3.05 million (7% growth) - 2027: \$3.25 million (6.6% growth) - 2028: \$4.1 million (26% growth with second location) - 2030: \$5.5 million (with two locations and product line)

Investment Requirements (2025-2030): - Facility improvements (2025-2026): \$185,000 - Second location (2027): \$1.5 million - Product line development: \$200,000 - Technology and systems: \$150,000 - Total: \$2.035 million

Funding Strategy: - Retained earnings: \$800,000 - Bank financing: \$900,000 - Additional investor capital: \$335,000

Risk Analysis & Mitigation

Identified Risks

Economic Risks: - Recession impact on discretionary dining spending - Rising food costs due to inflation - Labor shortage and wage pressure - Competition from new restaurant openings

Mitigation Strategies: - Diversified revenue streams (brunch, private events, retail) - Strong relationships with suppliers for price stability - Robust staff retention programs - Differentiated positioning and strong brand loyalty

Operational Risks: - Key personnel departure (especially chef/owner) - Supply chain disruptions - Equipment failure - Food safety incidents

Mitigation Strategies: - Cross-training and strong sous chef development - Multiple vendor relationships for critical ingredients - Regular equipment maintenance and replacement fund - Strict food safety protocols and regular audits

Market Risks: - Changing consumer preferences - Negative reviews or social media incidents - Saturation of farm-to-table market

Mitigation Strategies: - Menu innovation and trend monitoring - Strong customer service recovery protocols - Continuous concept refinement and differentiation - Building authentic story and community relationships

Awards & Recognition

Restaurant Awards

- Portland Monthly "Restaurant of the Year" Finalist (2020)
- Oregonian "Top 10 New Restaurants" (2019)
- Eater Portland "Restaurant of the Year" (2021)
- OpenTable "100 Most Romantic Restaurants in America" (2022, 2023)
- Wine Spectator "Award of Excellence" (2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024)

Chef Recognition

- Maria Elena Santiago: James Beard Award Semifinalist "Best Chef: Northwest" (2020, 2022, 2023)
- Sophie Laurent: Sommelier Journal "Rising Star Sommelier" (2021)
- Rachel Martinez: Dessert Professional "Top 10 Pastry Chefs" (2023)

Media Features

- Bon Appétit: "50 Best New Restaurants in America" (2020)
 - Food & Wine: "Where to Eat in Portland" (2021, 2023)
 - The New York Times: Travel section feature (2022)
 - Sunset Magazine: "Best Farm-to-Table Dining in the West" (2023)
 - Netflix "Somebody Feed Phil" location scout visit (in discussion for 2025)
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Contact Information

General Inquiries: Phone: (503) 555-0847 Email: hello@theemberandoak.com Website: www.theemberandoak.com

Reservations: Phone: (503) 555-0847 OpenTable: www.opentable.com/ember-and-oak-kitchen Text: (503) 555-0848

Private Events: Marcus Thompson, Private Events Coordinator Phone: (503) 555-0849 Email: events@theemberandoak.com

Press Inquiries: Maria Elena Santiago or David Chen Email: press@theemberandoak.com

Career Opportunities: Email: careers@theemberandoak.com Current openings: www.theemberandoak.com/careers

Social Media: Instagram: @emberandoakpdx Facebook: facebook.com/emberandoakkitchen Twitter: @emberandoakpdx

Conclusion

The Ember & Oak Kitchen represents a successful execution of modern farm-to-table dining with a unique focus on wood-fired cooking techniques. Founded on principles of sustainability, community engagement, and culinary excellence, the restaurant has established itself as a Portland dining destination while maintaining authentic relationships with local producers and a strong commitment to employee development.

With a solid foundation established over five years of operation, the restaurant is positioned for sustainable growth through strategic expansion, product line development, and continued innovation in both culinary offerings and sustainable business practices. The combination of strong leadership, clear values, and community integration provides a framework for long-term success.

The Ember & Oak Kitchen continues to evolve while staying true to its core mission: creating memorable dining experiences through exceptional food, warm hospitality, and responsible stewardship of our culinary resources.

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