

# Amar Santana

Executive Chef

Charlie Palmer at Bloomingdale's South Coast Plaza

Born in the Dominican Republic, Amar Santana relocated to the United States with his family and settled in the city of East Elmhurst, Queens. Chef Santana's ambition, work ethic and undeniable talent have propelled him on a fast track, commanding the helm of Chef Palmer's first Southern California restaurant at the age of 25.

As a high school student, Amar Santana completed an English language course and enrolled in a cooking program provided by the Careers through Culinary Arts Program (C-CAP). Following an internship at Chanterelle, one of New York's most famed French restaurants; he entered a C-CAP culinary competition and won a trip to London's prestigious *Le Cordon Bleu*. For two weeks, the 17-year-old trained with some of the world's most talented rising star chefs.

Upon his high school graduation, Santana enrolled in the Culinary Institute of America on full scholarship and served his externship at Aureole.

Unlike most externs, restricted to the post of *garde manger*, Santana was promoted to the hot appetizer and fish stations. After his CIA graduation in 2002, he graduated from the CIA and returned to Aureole as a full time cook. In October 2003, he was named *sous chef*, a position he maintained until Charlie Palmer selected him in 2007 to run the kitchen of his first Southern California restaurant, Charlie Palmer at Bloomingdale's South Coast Plaza.

In his role as Executive Chef, Santana has earned Charlie Palmer at Bloomingdale's four stars from the Orange County Register and one of Orange County's Top Ten restaurants by Orange Coast. Passionate about all things pork, Chef Santana continues to develop and master his dried meat and charcuterie making skills. His bold flavored menu includes unexpected flavor combinations and playful presentations, reflecting his zeal for life and food.



# Red Wine Braised Baby Octopus, Celery Root Puree, Candied Lemon, Fennel Salad

## Ingredients for Red Wine Braised Octopus:

- 2 Lbs. Cleaned Baby Octopus
- 2 Tablespoons Olive Oil
- 2.5 Cups of Red Wine
- 1.5 Cups Red Wine Vinegar
- 5 sprigs Fresh Thyme
- 2 Sprigs Fresh Rosemary
- 2 Fresh Bay Leafs
- 1 Celery Stalk Chopped
- 6 Garlic Cloves Smashed
- 1 Orange Cut in Half
- Salt and Pepper to taste

Turn the All-Clad Slow Cooker to high and let warm up for 3-5 minutes. Then saute the smashed garlic and celery and cook for about 5 minutes, add cleaned baby octopus, red wine, red wine vinegar and fresh herbs. Squeeze the orange and after add the orange to the octopus. Season with salt and pepper and cook on high heat for about 30 minutes then set it at slow and cook for 2 hours. Octopus should be nice and tender.

## Ingredients for Celery Root Puree:

- 1 Head of Celery Root (about 12 oz.)
- 2 Garlic Cloves Smashed
- 2 Cups of Half and Half
- Salt and Pepper to taste

In a small All-Clad Sauce Pan combine chopped and peeled celery root. Then add garlic and half and half and cook for about 30 minutes at medium to low heat or until the celery root is tender. Pure in a blender until smooth and season with salt and pepper.

## Ingredients for Candied Lemon:

- 2 Lemons Zested
- 2 Tablespoons of Lemon Juice
- ½ Cup of Sugar

1 Cup of water, peel lemon with a vegetable peeler, julienne with a knife and blanch 3 times in the water. Then after blanching combine lemon juice, water, sugar, and blanched lemon zest and cook for 30 minutes at medium heat.

**Ingredients for Fennel Salad:**

- 2 Fennel Bulbs
- 2 Oranges
- 1 Red Onion
- 1 Teaspoon of Red Wine Vinegar
- 1 Tablespoon Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 Lemon Juice
- 1/4 Teaspoon of Salt
- 1/8 Teaspoon of Pepper
- 1 Teaspoon of Chopped Dill

Cut off the green feathery tops and the base of the fennel bulbs (about ½ inch). Wash the bulbs and then slice in 1/8 inch wide strips.

Peel and cut two of the oranges in small pieces and put in a salad bowl with the fennel.

Peel and thinly slice the red onion.

Prepare a vinaigrette with the juice of the other orange, vinegar, lemon juice, olive oil, and salt and pepper. Pour this on the salad and toss a mix. Add the chopped dill right before serving to prevent from turning brown.