

## MEET YOUR chef:

Get to know your local Vail Valley chefs

## KEVIN ERVING

of The Sebastian's Leonora and Frost Bar

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*Editor's Note: The Vail Daily is showcasing area chefs in a new series called "Meet Your Chef" so you can learn a bit more about those creating art in the kitchen. If you're a local chef and would like to be a part of this series, please email Tricia Swenson (tswenson@vaildaily.com) and Sean Naylor (snaylor@vaildaily.com).*

**Q: What is your name, where do you cook and what is your official title?**

**A:** Kevin Erving, executive chef at The Sebastian — Leonora and Frost Bar



THE SEBASTIAN/COURTESY PHOTO

Kevin Erving is the executive chef at The Sebastian Vail, overseeing operations at Leonora Restaurant and Frost Bar.

**Q: How long have you lived in the valley and what brought you here?**

**A:** This will be my eighth winter season in the Vail Valley. I relocated with Four Seasons Hotels from Hawaii in 2014. Leaving Hawaii wasn't easy, but as a kid, I always dreamed of being an executive chef at a mountain ski resort.

**Q: When did you first realize that you wanted to become a chef?**

**A:** I was seven years old and went to work with my mother one day who was a restaurant manager. I got to stand on a stool and help the chef stir in the roux to a 40-gallon batch of clam chowder with a whisk that was taller than I was! I was hooked and that's when I knew I wanted to be a chef.

**Q: Who has inspired you throughout your culinary journey?**

**A:** As a kid, I grew up watching the "Frugal Gourmet" and the original "Iron Chef," but my favorite show was "Rick Bayless Mexico One Plate at a Time." As an adult, I have had many great coworkers, colleagues and mentor chefs in my career for which I am grateful. I've lived in many places and have had some incredible food experiences along the way.

**Q: What's your favorite spice?**

**A:** Dried chiles, ancho, guajillo, chipotle, fresh lemon, thyme, dill, parsley, cilantro. It really depends on the dish, but I definitely don't shy away from flavor.

**Q: Favorite protein?**

**A:** Currently, I would have to say pork belly, but as a chef you have many favorites, and for me, it's more about treating each ingredient with the respect it deserves. That can make them all favorites!

**Q: Favorite fruits and veggies?**

**A:** I'm not sure I could pick just one or five. I get really excited by the change in seasons and the ingredients that are at the peak of each season. I love winter and hearty braised dishes



THE SEBASTIAN/COURTESY PHOTO

Executive chef Kevin Erving leads the culinary team at The Sebastian Vail in Vail village.

with parsnips, celery root and roasted beets. Then spring comes along with baby carrots, strawberries, mint and rhubarb. Summer is also a favorite with corn, heirloom tomatoes, lettuce, herbs and anything on the grill. Then fall brings it full circle with apples, mushrooms, squash and pickling the best of summer. Then, it's time to do it all over again.

**Q: Name your carb: pasta, potatoes, rice, polenta, etc.?**

**A:** Tough one. I really like polenta/grits and the multitude of flavors that can be infused into them to complement a dish. But then I can always be persuaded by freshly made Lyonnais potatoes loaded with butter, onions and thyme.

**Q: What's your favorite comfort food?**

**A:** Tacos, tacos, tacos! You can put anything in a corn tortilla with a little salsa and it can be amazing! Also, after a trip to Italy a few years back, pizza cooked in a true wood-fired oven could make it a close tie. That trip inspired my quest for a great pizza. One day, I made 13 different pizza dough



THE SEBASTIAN/COURTESY PHOTO

Kevin Erving is passionate about food and building a team of like-minded people who can offer guests an incredible culinary experience.

recipes until I found the perfect one.

**Q: Is there anything else about you we should share?**

**A:** I am passionate about food and building a team of like-minded people who can offer our guests an incredible culinary experience. As with every local business recently, we are adapting, retooling and reinventing what it means to offer a quality experience. I'm looking forward to bringing The Sebastian back into the conversation of places to eat in Vail.