

THE WESTIN
VERASA
NAPA

**The Westin Verasa, Napa
Culinary Overview: La Toque & Bank Facts**



Overview: La Toque, located in The Westin Verasa, Napa, featuring fresh, seasonal ingredients, is open for dinner nightly. The restaurant celebrates its ten-year anniversary in Napa Valley by relocating to The Westin planned to open September 18th.

La Toque Background: Chef Ken Frank opened La Toque in the Napa Valley community of Rutherford in 1998 and since then it has become known throughout the country and world. The Wine Spectator magazine named La Toque one of “America’s Best Restaurants” and it has also earned a prestigious Michelin star. When La Toque relocates to The Westin the restaurant will provide the same level of excellence and friendly, unpretentious service for which it has become known.

Style of Cuisine: Since becoming a chef in the mid-1970s, Ken Frank has earned a stellar reputation for his personalized style of cooking grounded in the French cuisine he grew to know and love while living in France as a teenager. Frank, who was one of the pioneers of using the freshest, seasonal, quality ingredients, continues this tradition at La Toque, where many of the ingredients are organic or sustainable. After moving to Napa ten years ago, Chef Frank’s style has continued to evolve in a more harmonious wine friendly direction and the restaurant has become well known for its savvy wine pairings. “People come here because they’re excited about food and wine,” says Frank. “Food and wine are both a very big part of everything that happens in wine country.”

La Toque’s new location at The Westin Verasa, Napa will enable Chef Frank to broaden the menu, simply providing more choices for diners while staying true to the same style of cuisine for which the Chef and restaurant are known.

La Toque Specialties: La Toque is internationally recognized for its annual truffle menu and foodies will have an opportunity to learn first-hand about this specialty when Chef Frank hosts “Truffle Camp.” Included will be truffle cooking lessons, a special truffle lunch with the Chef, exclusive barrel tastings at wineries not normally open to the public, visits to local farmers and purveyors, and accommodations at The Westin. Chef Frank plans to introduce other “lifestyle experiences” revolving around a single ingredient or specialty.

Emphasis on Wine: Sommelier Scott Tracy will bring La Toque’s extensive wine list and innovative, highly regarded wine pairing to the new Westin location. The restaurant is widely recognized for its award-winning wine cellar featuring more than 800 selections.

General Atmosphere: La Toque’s ambiance is understated and classically luxurious while at the same time remaining warm and welcoming. It is meant to reflect back the Napa environment in a classy, understated way that emphasizes the wine making culture.

The dining room is designed around celebratory experiences with luxurious booths made from ebonized oak and wrapped in deep, plush leather. Light fixtures are crafted from a variety of materials including textured art glass providing diners with a sense of how the object was made. Marble topped counters with wood cabinets at the bar further emphasize the luxurious blending of different materials. The understated personality of the dining room enables guests to focus on the celebration of food, wine and good company.

Patio Dining: To take advantage of Napa's outdoor culture, La Toque will feature a spacious patio seating area with retractable awnings, wind control features, heaters, and built-in wooden benches with comfortable cushions. The atmosphere is designed to replicate the feel of the indoor dining room while simultaneously allowing guests to enjoy Napa's mild weather.

Chef's Background: Chef Ken Frank's love of French cooking began in 1972 when he was 16 years old and his father went on sabbatical, moving the family to Yvoire, France, a small 16th century walled village on the French side of Lake Geneva. At the end of the year when his family returned home, Frank wanted to remain. His parents agreed as long as he found a job and a place to live. He found a humble start to his culinary career as a dishwasher at a local restaurant where he began to develop an appreciation for richly flavored country food—fresh fish, stews, roasts, sausages, farm-fresh vegetables and artisan cheeses, crusty breads and intriguing desserts. To this day, he considers himself to be a French chef wrapped in a California body.

When he returned to the U.S., Chef Frank cooked hamburgers on weekends at a Southern California ski resort to raise money to return to France. His intent was to become a marine biologist or a doctor and cooking was initially a way to pay his way through college. Once in school, however, he realized that cooking was his true passion and vowed to become the next great American Chef.

In 1976, after refining his skills at a number of other restaurants, Chef Frank was hired as head chef at La Guillotine on the Sunset Strip. His culinary skills at La Guillotine earned him critical acclaim, but when the overzealous owner began adding more tables, and scandalously asking guests to leave as soon as they were finished eating, Frank left the restaurant instead, unwilling to compromise his ideals. Since then, he has become known as a pioneer, insisting on using only the finest seasonal, fresh ingredients.

After another trip to France, Frank became the original chef at Michael's restaurant in Santa Monica, widely considered to be the Los Angeles birthplace of "California Cuisine." Later that year he left to open his own restaurant, the original "La Toque" which became an instant success with *Gourmet* magazine singing its praises.

In 1998, after having sold the Los Angeles La Toque and opening a number of other restaurants, Frank moved to the Napa Valley, enchanted with the concept of living and cooking in a place where visitors come because they're excited about food and wine. Frank opened La Toque in the Rutherford location in 1998 and now celebrates the restaurant's ten-year anniversary in Napa with the move to the Westin Verasa.

Architect/Interior Designer: CCS Architecture, San Francisco. The Award-winning architectural firm has brought its extensive experience designing some of the country's finest restaurants to its design work at La Toque. The firm is responsible for noted establishments such as Lettus: Café Organic, Restaurant LuLu, Terzo, Perbacco and Bay 13.

Architectural Focal Points: First and foremost, CCS Architecture designed La Toque to revolve around great food. Consequently, there are plenty of opportunities for patrons to observe chefs at work and the resulting artistry. Upon entering the restaurant, guests will encounter an unencumbered view of the kitchen and the culinary team. A series of monolithic wood walls broken up by brass-edged glass panes separates the dining room from the cooking area. Once seated in the dining room, diners can continue to observe kitchen activity through this series of windows with chefs finishing items on a large marble-topped counter. The wall is home to an open display of cooking tools, glassware, and plates. Six seats at the bar offer further glimpses of kitchen activity behind the bar's glass-walled liquor display.

La Toque Architecture Focal Points, cont: A chef's table set back in a kitchen side nook encased in ebonized wood will provide another opportunity for six guests to get a close-hand glimpse of kitchen activity.

The indoor-outdoor fireplace will serve as another focal point in the restaurant. The inside of the fireplace, constructed of stacked marble, will face the dining room. The backside of the fireplace will face toward diners seated on the patio, and will serve as a beacon visible from far away so that it will attract anyone approaching that side of the hotel.

Bank Café & Bar

Overview: Named for its location near the edge of the Napa River, which traverses behind the Westin, Bank Café & Bar will serve as a meeting and greeting place where friends and associates gather to enjoy each other's company. Whereas La Toque is classically luxurious, Bank is casual and hip.

By day, guests can savor the quintessential California outdoor breakfast or a relaxing lunch while taking in views of the nearby nature preserve and mountains to the east. During the early evening Bank will host The Westin's signature 'Unwind' ritual, where guests meet for a refreshing experience to journey from day to night.

In the evening, Bank's hip café and lounge will offer an extensive menu of small, easy-to-share plates for guests seeking a more casual dining experience. One of its distinguishing characteristics will be an extensive collection of half bottles of wine. Sommelier Scott Tracy is working closely with premier wineries and vintners to create half bottles especially for Bank, enabling guests to sample a wider variety of wines and to share their selections with others.

As the celebration continues into the night, Bank will provide a seductive atmosphere to "Wind Up" the evening with cleverly composed plates of miniature sweets featuring chocolates, nuts, and fresh fruits, all of course carefully paired with delicious dessert wines and a wide selection of liqueurs.

Architectural Focal Points: To create the impression that Bank is a continuation of the lobby but yet a destination in and of itself, its main feature is an island bar that serves both the bar area and adjacent lobby. Floating over the bar is a wine display and bottle storage system made of stainless steel and wire mesh, with dramatic internal lighting features that cast a warm glow on the pewter bar below. Blackened steel below the bar top and custom lights with handcrafted amber glass imbue the space with a rich, yet cozy, character.

Integrated into the bar is a community table to accommodate larger groups and create a focal point for social gathering. Interior walls feature luxurious recycled teak paneled walls and rich leather covered banquettes for additional dining and cocktail seating.

Bank's extensive outdoor patio is situated next to the pool, and will lure visitors outside with views of the river, nature preserve, walking path and beauty of the Napa Valley.