

PIERINO JERMONTI
Executive Pastry Chef
T. Cook's and Royal Palms Resort and Spa

Pierino (Perry) Jermonti joined Royal Palms Resort and Spa in Phoenix, Arizona as Executive Pastry chef in 1996. Jermonti is the creative force behind all of the desserts, pastries and freshly baked Mediterranean breads on the award winning T. Cook's menu and the elaborate wedding cakes and pastries for weddings and special events held at Royal Palms. He was named Manager of the Year for the resort in 1999.

Prior to taking the lead position in the pastry kitchen at Royal Palms, Jermonti was the pastry chef at the Arizona Biltmore Resort and the Wrigley Mansion Club, both in Phoenix, Lon's at the Hermosa Inn in Paradise Valley, Arizona and the Citadel in Scottsdale.

Born in Cosenza, Italy, Jermonti's love of baking began at age five. Inspired by his father, Jermonti learned the skills and techniques to make the traditional focaccia, flatbreads and rustic peasant breads of the region. "My father, in addition to being my first teacher, was my first idol. Perfection was the key to everything he did." Jermonti's grandmother imbued him with a passion for the art of food – that which "cannot be learned but must come from the heart. My father and grandmother taught me that all the education in the world cannot take the place of the love of baking."

The Jermonti family established many successful food service businesses throughout the Midwestern United States, and at the age of fifteen, Pierino relocated from Cosenza to be a part of this growing family enterprise. Jermonti's family and cultural background provided him with a rich legacy for his talent and the creativity he currently expresses in his work.

While baking bread is in Jermonti's heart, dessert and chocolate creations appeal to his artistic nature. Many of his extraordinary desserts are based on time-honored family recipes, but it's his idol, Frank Lloyd Wright, who inspires his art of presentation. In fact, at a young age, he dreamt of being an architect, and today approaches his designs from a structural perspective. He begins with a drawing of his vision and then "builds his masterpiece" much like an artist chiseling a sculpture.

His artistic creations and recipes have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Pastry Art & Design*, *Chocolatier*, *Food & Wine* and *Bon Appetit*. *Bride's*, *Perfect Bride* and *InStyle* have featured his wedding cake artistry. Jermonti's decadent holiday offerings were the focus of the November/December 2005 issue of *The Magazine of La Cucina Italiana*, with a multi-page spread of photos and recipes. Early in his career, he was honored as "Best Baker in America, Best Bread" by *Travel + Leisure*.

Jermonti has made two appearances on the Food Network: in 2005, *Sugar Rush* featured his hand-crafted sweets, and a year later, he was a guest chef on the Food Network's *Wedding Cake Surprise Challenge*.

In 2007, Jermonti participated in one of the country's largest gatherings of international chefs, Delaware's Meals from the Masters, and the same year, he won a gold medal for Best Dessert at the Scottsdale Culinary Festival. He has been a frequent guest chef at the James Beard House in New York as part of the T. Cook's culinary team and has participated as a celebrity chef at functions for Commanderie de Bordeaux, the International Wine & Food Society, and Les Chaines de Rotisseur.

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