



Rick Neal CEC, Executive Chef

Chef Rick Neal was born in southwestern United States, and hails from generations of cooking and food lovers. At an early age his dad and uncle taught him to barbeque everything from whole, bone in pork shoulders, to ribs and chicken wings. He also learned about food preparation watching his mother and grandmother cook for large family functions. Delicious pies made from scratch and wonderful, traditional southern dishes were always part of the Neal family events, This is where he found his first inspiration for the creation and delivery of tantalizing and nutritional foods.

His inspiration broadened as his family moved to Southern California providing opportunities to experience fresh West Coast seafood and multi cultural dishes from around the world. Family vacations exposed him to fresh fish from the crystal lakes of Utah, Southwestern cuisines from Arizona and New Mexico. He instantly discovered a passion for cooking, for art and for golf that would groom him for opportunities to come later in his future.

Chef Rick moved to Texas in the 1990's and was privileged to be mentored by Chef Gunars V. "Dutch" Pencis CEC, Chef Jack Bretzke CEC AAC, Chef Jackson York CEC AAC and Chef Mark Schneider CEC, AAC, CCE, ACE. They impressed upon him what it means to be a great chef, not just a just a chef. The magic of baking entered his repertoire and rounded out his specialty items. Somewhere in those journeys surrounded by family, mentors and good friends, the realization that the preparation, the cooking of the food and the presentation and proper plating of the food was an art form in and of itself. His joy, happiness and personal satisfaction exploded as his early years of training and inspiration merged with his passion to artfully create dishes to enhance each patron's dining experience. Chef Rick made his avocation his vocation. For the past eleven years, he loves designing and preparing cuisine for all members, guests, and especially elegant banquets of Eagle's Bluff Country Club.

Besides creation and execution of culinary delights, Rick is a ice and fruit sculptor and carver. He enjoys traveling with his wife Denise and daughter Berkley, golfing at the club and loves his Harley Davidson motorcycle.

Memberships & Associations

- American Culinary Federation
- Texas Chefs Association
- World Association of Chef Societies
- Texas Restaurant Association
- Go Texan Association

Achievements

- Signature chef - March of Dimes, Tyler Texas 2010-2014
- First Place - Ben E Keith - Shreveport, LA - 2013
- Bronze medal- ACF- Dallas, TX- 2015
- Bronze medal- ACF- Dallas, TX- 2017
- Texas Chef Association "Contributor of the Year" - 2013 & 2015
- Chef of the Year - East Texas Chef Association - 2014 & 2017
- Director of the East Texas Chef Association - 2013 - Present
- Tyler "Thera - Pet Association - Lead Chef 2015 - Present
- Ocean Reef Club Food & Wine Festival- Guest Chef - 2017
- ACF National Convention Texas Beef & Beef Paring Presenter - 2017
- Texas Chefs Association "2017 Texas Chef of the Year"
- ACF Certified Executive Chef CEC
- Silver Medal-ACF Madison, Wisconsin- 2108
- Gold Medal- ACF Ft. Worth, Texas - 2018

Giving Back of His Talents

- Habitat for Humanity - Coordinating Chef 2005 - 2006
- Meals On Wheels - Chef Instructor 2006-2007
- East Texas Food Bank - Chef Instructor 2009- 2012
- Tyler Parks & Recreation - Television Chef Instructor 2012 - Present
- Texas State Fair - Celebrity Chef's Cooking Demo 2013-Present

Favorite Cook Books:

The French Laundry Cookbook
The New Professional Chef