

CCSF Culinary Arts

Manuel Hewitt

Owner and Executive Chef / Barrel Room

WHAT BROUGHT MANUEL TO CCSF

As a kid, Manuel Hewitt lived most of the year with his grandmother in Colorado, but spent holidays with his grandfather, running around CCSF's Ocean Campus. Chris, grandfather taught physics at CCSF for 40 years. After high school, I was too punk to get a job. Dishwashing was all I could get. I worked up to prep cook, and then line cook. Manuel's grandfather always wanted one of his kids to go to CCSF, but they never did. So, he made me an offer to come to San Francisco and go to school there.

MANUEL'S CCSF EXPERIENCE

Manuel moved and enrolled at CCSF. "CCSF is an interesting college. I liked that it was so accessible. You had people from all walks of life. Manuel took classes in audio engineering and philosophy, before committing to culinary arts. "I had a lot of kitchen experience, so CCSF was more transformative, mentally. I went from being one of the younger guys in the kitchen with a lot to learn to being one of the older guys who had a lot of experience, and culinary went from being something I was doing while I figured my life out, to something I wanted to do with my life.

MANUEL'S CAREER

After graduating from CCSF, Manuel applied for a cook job at a "weird little place in Oakland." The Barrel Room was a tiny wine bar with a tinier kitchen. "Within a month's time I replaced the chef there." They didn't have a prep kitchen. "So, every day I'd go to the farmers market, hand-select my produce, drive to the Meatpacking plant, pick up the meat, prepare everything at an off-site prep kitchen, and drive it to the restaurant." It was hard work, so when the owner of Barrel Room, Sarah Trubnick, had the chance to open a restaurant (with a larger kitchen) in San Francisco's financial district Manuel was excited. "Everyone thought she was crazy, except me, but it's been a pretty crazy three years." And totally worthwhile; Manuel and Sarah are partners and the Barrell Room is a success. Manuel creates a completely new menu three times a year, each boasting geographic-based pairings of food and wine. "We have a lot of regulars who are excited to come in and try the next thing." Building on that achievement, the pair recently opened a new restaurant, Perigo, in the Marina District.

WHY MANUEL THINKS PROSPECTIVE CULINARY STUDENTS SHOULD CONSIDER CCSF

"I wouldn't have been able to do everything I've done without the connections I made at City College." Danny Murcia, Chef de Cuisine at Perigo, and Jason Ostrander, Sous-Chef at the Barrel Room were both in Manuel's class at CCSF. Manuel says it's those interpersonal relationships that make CCSF a great place to learn. "See who's working hard, has their head down and is dedicated to the craft. Stick with those people and get to know them well. You can create the next generation of chefs."

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SFCulinary Arts and Hospitality Management Class of '12