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# Farm To Fork Across America. Mad Chef Jimmy Schmidt

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Emulsions? Infused oils? Salt blends? Ingredients that I love although lack confidence to use in my own kitchen. A lesson using these ingredients was recently given to me in the form of a private, culinary, tete-a-tete at the hands of Master Chef (and three-time recipient of the James Beard Award) [Jimmy Schmidt](#) of [Morgan's in the desert](#) at the La Quinta Resort outside of Palm Springs, CA.



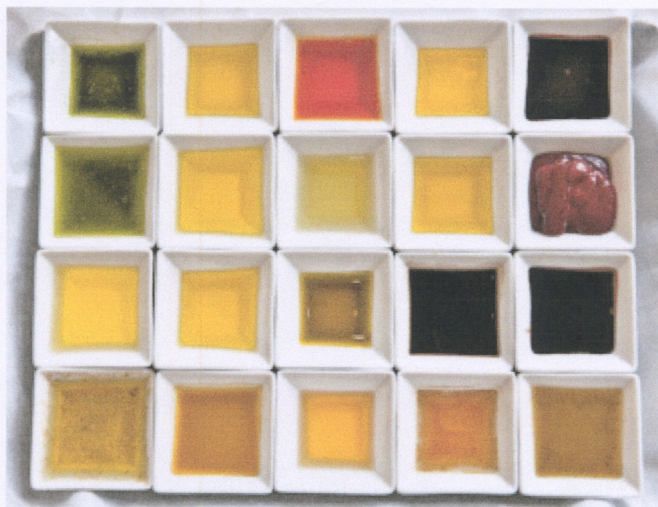
An electrical engineer "gone mad," Chef Jimmy uses his knowledge of "electrostatic effects in protein bonding" and the Periodic Table to create delectable dishes for another kind of table. He's on a mission to

shift how foods are made in order to enhance their nutritional benefits. More often than not, Jimmy's imaginative recipes bluff one to think that they are dining on creations made with butter, cream and pasta. Bluffing, in the sense that these exquisite dishes are devoid of such ingredients.

Rather, Jimmy uses flavorful and nutritional ingredients like scallops, celeriac or apples, to play the role of "pasta" in a traditional ravioli shape. Giant sea scallops are pounded paper thin, topped with a lobster medley, then sealed with a final sheet of scallop to look exactly like a ravioli. Tart apples are sliced thin and flash caramelized and encase roasted cauliflower to form a "creamy" nugget. Celeriac is sliced thin, blanched al dente, then filled with a wild mushroom ragout to deliver a rich woodsy flavor. Here's a [recipe](#) for Red Roasted Cauliflower, Buratta, and Celeriac Ravioli to try at home.

Jimmy's approach is to molecularly enhance the protein bonding of nutritionally rich ingredients not used in conventional recipes that use white flour and sugar. He refers to one of these creations as "dough based technology," which is deliverable in many forms from pizza to confectionary wafers and even cookies, built entirely on plant-based proteins and fiber. DBT is also high in Beta Carotenes, vitamins, [prebiotics](#) and [probiotics](#), while low in refined carbohydrates. This brilliance has landed him front and center as a food designer for Atkins, (the prominent weight loss company), ISS Sports Nutrition, and a host of nutrition based food companies.

My initial interview with Jimmy was conducted last January over a dinner prepared in his celebrated kitchen at Morgan's in the Desert. Taking his seat, Jimmy couldn't wait to hand me a [list](#) of his favorite local organic farms which provide him with succulent mangos, assorted dates, and other produce. He also called my attention to a kind of beef, [Wagyu cattle](#), bred at the [Anchorena Ranch](#) in Uruguay. There, the cattle free range on micronutrient enhanced grasses, yielding a higher level of omega fatty acids than that found in salmon... who knew? And in fact, this shared interest, the topic of tasty food equaling higher nutritional value, was the theme of my last blog, "[Health Begins In The Soil.](#)"



[Oil Captions](#)

I asked Jimmy, what his secrets are to produce these exceptional dishes. His face lit up, and he said, "Handcrafted emulsions, infused oils, and salt blends." We made plans to meet again in his kitchen to explore the ingredient structure of his secrets and to photograph the makings of his fennel emulsion for Seared Ahi Tuna Steak, Roasted Fennel, Olive and Orange Salad [recipe](#).



This opportunity presented itself at the [Justin Vineyards & Winery](#) wine pairing dinner in honor of Earth Day. Jimmy had carefully crafted his [four course menu](#) to complement the exceptional wines. Just hours prior to the dinner, Jimmy gave me an intimate viewing to photograph his personal palette of secret ingredients, artfully arranged in color, texture and taste.

These ingredients include oils, emulsions and salts that are the components of "overlapping flavors," a symphony of different notes that are the "building blocks" in Jimmy's kitchen. Most of the oils he infuses himself with spices or other oils derived from fruits or vegetables, so that the essential flavors do not dissipate while cooking. His handmade emulsions suspend ingredients that would otherwise separate due to their chemical composition, maintaining the character of the combined flavor. The emulsion is drizzled on last to tie-in the flavors of the dish.

Blended salts play into the finish of the dish, adding flare, crunch and a final accent to the complexity of tastes. Jimmy is picky about the specific mineral and aquatic plant values of base salts, often combining several at once to get the exact flavor he desires. These are chosen to compliment spices such as fennel or coriander, which are also mixed into the salt to achieve the final flavor profile. If he can't make the salt himself, his favorite online resource is [Saltraders](#), owned by Didi Davis.



### [Blended Salt Captions](#)

In addition, he holds many food patents, including a super tasty nutritional drink that fuels your body and mental focus to its full potential named [Jimmy Juice](#), with electrostatic balance that captures increased efficiency and accelerates cellular absorption. Only Jimmy!

Interconnectivity running deep, Jimmy is also about a desire to fuse the profound relationship between farmer and chef that is necessary to foster a more sustainable food system worldwide. In 1991, Jimmy founded the [Chefs Collaborative](#). The Collaborative "... is a national chef network that's changing the sustainable food landscape using the power of connections, education and responsible buying decisions." The Collaborative is still going strong today.

Here's to Jimmy, his legacy and what he brings to our future.....

Julie