



## Garland Hotel opens The Front Yard

In 1972, actress Beverly Garland and her husband Fillmore Crank built The Garland Hotel on seven acres in North Hollywood, just minutes from the hub of TV and film studios in the San Fernando Valley. Three decades later, the 250-room hotel was handed down to their son James Crank, who launched a \$20-million renovation.

The final phase, completed this year, included the addition of a new restaurant called The Front Yard, which opened earlier this month.



Recruited as executive chef was Chris Turano, who was previously chef de cuisine at Bacara Resort & Spa in Santa Barbara, Calif. That job he got after appearing on the Food Network show Chef Wanted in 2013.

Turano is managing foodservice throughout the hotel, including several busy banquet spaces on property, as well as working to bring in more than just hotel guests to The Front Yard, a three-daypart concept.

Here's Turano's take:

What are the challenges of designing a menu for a signature restaurant that serves three dayparts, along with providing room service and banquet services for a 250-room hotel?

Turano: It is always a challenge to execute multiple menus from the same kitchen. The only way to be successful is to have a common theme. Our focus is making sure that the quality of food is the same high quality across the board from The Front Yard, to room service, the pool, happy hour and catering. We focus on building a pantry of high-quality curated ingredients. When it comes time to creating a menu, the most important thing is great quality, which lends itself to making a lot of people happy.

What are the guiding principles of your menu?

Turano: I am always looking for the best ingredients I can get my hands on. Here in California, I get to be a kid in a candy store, versus when I was cooking in Chicago. When you start with really good ingredients and focus on elevating them, you are on a solid path to really good food.

In past incarnations, I understand about 80 percent of restaurant guests were staying at the hotel. You're hoping to shift that ratio to bring in more non-hotel guests. How will you do that?

Turano: We start with the common theme that everybody really just wants quality food that is not pretentiously delivered.

Focusing on great ingredients and bringing out their natural qualities is how I look at cooking. Period.

Keeping true to the theme of quality ingredients, prepared thoughtfully, will put us on the map for the locals. From there, the taste and the personal touch that we provide will keep guests coming back.

The Garland Hotel was first opened in the 1970s by Hollywood actress Beverly Garland and her husband Fillmore Crank, and it's still family owned. How have you tapped that history for the menu?

Turano: Being a family-run hotel from day one, we wanted to make sure that element shined in our menu. We have a lot of things that are made for sharing, from our take on Mac and Cheese, a ricotta cavatelli with comte and mascarpone with charred scallion bread crumbs, to a whole boned, brined, smoked and fried chicken.

You were on The Food Network's Chef Wanted show in 2013, and your restaurant is virtually spitting distance from several of L.A.'s major studios. Is more TV in your future?

Turano: I had a great time on the show and it brought my wife and me to California, but right now I am focusing on making sure that The Front Yard is firing on all cylinders.