37th Annual

Great Chefs of the West

FEATURING THE TOP CHEFS IN DENVER

Franco Ruiz – Woodie Fisher

Franco Ruiz is the executive chef of Woodie Fisher. A nationally registered historic landmark and Denver's oldest standing fire station, the restaurant has been reinvigorated as a neighborhood gathering place with an emphasis on ingredient- and technique-driven fare.

Most recently, Ruiz was the chef de cuisine at Fruition Restaurant – widely regarded as one of the best restaurants in Denver – for six years. Working under the tutelage of James Beard Award-winning chef Alex Seidel, Ruiz honed his skills and passion for sourcing seasonal and sustainable ingredients, as well as his leadership skills, creating an environment in which young chefs were able to grow and learn. Prior to Fruition Restaurant, Ruiz assisted in the opening of Hops & Pie, a Denver staple for pizza and beer, as its opening chef de cuisine.

Originally from San Diego, Ruiz began cooking alongside his father, a chef for Wolfgang Puck in the 1980s, at the age of 13. Ruiz' core values – working with fresh, local and sustainable ingredients – were ingrained at an early age as a result of his family background and California lifestyle.

A graduate of the San Diego Culinary Institute, Ruiz has traveled from Mexico to Europe, including France and Spain, working in an array of restaurants, including several Michelin-starred venues. He's also received accolades that include "32 Restaurant Stars on the Rise" from *FSR Magazine,* and "Denver Chefs Who Are Rising Stars" by *The Denver Post*.