



Edward Leonard, CMC



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Director of Culinary Operations
The Polo Club of Boca Raton (Fla.)

*Club Food Matters: Building a
Culture of Culinary Excellence*

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Edward G. Leonard, CMC, GMC, FSP, AAC, is the Director of Culinary Operations and Executive Chef at The Polo Club of Boca Raton (Fla.) With nine kitchens, five restaurants, three event venues, along with a spa complex and active tennis and golf facilities at the property, Chef Leonard directs a team of over 85 to meet the food-and-beverage needs of a community with 1,700 houses and 3,450 members.

Before joining The Polo Club, Leonard served as Director of Culinary Operations and Executive Chef at Reynolds Plantation (now Reynolds Lake Oconee) in Greensboro, Ga., a lifestyle resort and club property with 10,000 acres, six golf courses, five clubhouse, ten restaurants and banquet operations. In that position, Chef Leonard led a culinary team of over 70 chefs and cooks.

Prior to moving to Reynolds, Chef Leonard was the Vice President & Corporate Chef of Culinary Education, Restaurants and Hospitality for the Le Cordon Bleu Schools in North America. In this position, he traveled throughout the U.S. and Europe, sharing his passion for the craft of cookery while overseeing 16 colleges and more than 100 kitchens.

Chef Leonard also served as Executive Chef/Director of Food & Beverage of The Westchester Country Club in Rye, N.Y. for eight years, where he earned accolades for his culinary student extern program, through which over 150 students worked and trained in his kitchens as part of two-year accredited apprentice program. Eight graduates of that program are now working as executive chefs for some of the club industry's leading food-and-beverage programs.

Chef Leonard is one of only 72 Certified Master Chefs in the United States, having earned his Masters in Cookery at the Culinary Institute of America and passing an exam that over 64% have failed. He is a member of the World Master Chef Society, along with being a certified WACS master chef. In the past three years, under his tutelage Chef Leonard has trained five chefs who have passed the master chef exam.

Chef Leonard received a full doctorate in culinary arts from Johnson & Wales University for his impact and contribution to the craft and profession.

In 2010, Chef Leonard was the first American chef to serve as keynote speaker at Nanning, China's festival of chefs that is attended by over 1,300 chefs from throughout Asia. In 2013, he was the first American chef to receive initiation into the Chinese International Chefs association, and with chefs from Le Cordon Bleu, he took a gold medal in the first-ever Beijing International Cookery Cup.

In that same year, he was invited by the Galaxy Group in Macau to be a celebrity guest chef for an American barbecue for the Hong Kong and American Embassy, along with a private wine dinner and an "up close and personal" cooking class.

In November 2013, Chef Leonard brought a team of chefs to Dubai for the World Hospitality Cup and took second place in competition with 15 global national teams.

Chef Leonard has authored seven culinary books and received numerous professional awards and honors. He has been featured twice in "Chef to Chef" interview features in *Club & Resort Business*—first while at Westchester Country Club ("Writing the Book on Private Club Cuisine," September 2006, <http://clubandresortbusiness.com/2006/09/writing-the-book-on-private-club-cuisine/>), and then again after joining The Polo Club of Boca Raton ("Passion Play," October 2015, <http://clubandresortbusiness.com/2015/10/42078/>).