

## Levi Seed, Director of Hospitality & Lead Sommelier of Joel Palmer House Restaurant

### Next Generation Chef, Sommelier, Cancer Survivor & Activist

At the tender age of 27, Levi Seed's precocious talent, dedication, and collection of 38 custom-made suits set him apart. This dynamic young chef and Certified Sommelier lives by a commitment to "constant and never ending improvement in hospitality excellence," striving to restore the **professionalism and exacting service standards of another era, with the innovation and creativity of his generation.**

Levi dreamed of being a chef as long as he can remember, but also pushed himself in martial arts and academics. A grueling, years-long battle with childhood leukemia inspired him to choose his greatest passion after high school. **"Cancer is one of those life altering circumstances that can either be taken as a burden or as a blessing," he says. "I chose the latter."** He enrolled in the Oregon Culinary Institute, where he tasted wine for the first time and earned his degree in fine dining, culinary arts, and management.

Levi honed his cooking skills in Shanghai and Portland before joining the wine world, working at **Argyle, Domaine Serene and Ponzi** as well as developing the beverage program for a \$17M fine dining restaurant project. In September 2020, he came to the Joel Palmer House as Assistant Manager and Lead Sommelier, helping Chef Owner Christopher Czarnecki manage staff and the growing beverage program. With his culinary background and tireless work ethic, he was soon promoted to Director of Hospitality, working with Chef Czarnecki to develop seasonal menus and a wine program that pushes the envelope of Oregon fine dining.

Levi's **culinary creativity**, attention to detail, and professionalism are central to the Joel Palmer dining experience, as is his passion for **showcasing the diversity and range of Willamette Valley Pinot Noir**. The restaurant's Oregon-focused wine program is without equal, comprising **almost 600 different selections** from the state, with vintages ranging from 1994 to current releases. "We are just now starting to see the full ageability, but we've seen that most Pinot Noir from our region benefits from at least 5 years or more," says Levi. "Our list has been growing for the last 28 years, so **we can open things from 5, 10, 15 or 20 years ago** and judge for ourselves, and give our guests an accurate opinion." Seeking out the rare and exceptional, Levi's thoughtful curation offers guests the opportunity to open wines that never leave Oregon, as well as **cult labels and library verticals not available anywhere else.**

Levi's passion extends beyond his own career, however. Having faced barriers to entry himself as a non-white young person of modest means, he now organizes a **weekly tasting and study group** for generational peers training towards a sommelier certification. He also serves on several executive boards of directors for **local childhood cancer organizations**, donating his time and skills to support awareness and fundraising campaigns. From devising and preparing unique private wine dinners for charity auction lots, to tapping his network to create fundraising private-label wines, he kindly shares his energy and talent to help those coming up behind him.

With his talent, his drive, and his compassion, Levi brings a bolt of new energy to post-pandemic fine dining, and to the Willamette Valley wine world he has made his own.