

A man with short brown hair, wearing a white chef's coat and dark blue jeans, stands outdoors. He is leaning against a white wall with a blue door in the background. The chef's coat has a small logo on the left chest that says "anthology".

# Todd Allison

Executive Chef

Todd Allison didn't start out wanting to be a chef. He actually wanted to be a race car driver and had his future road to success all laid out for him.

"It was set in stone that I was going to go to a racing school," Allison said. "That's where my passions were, but a certain series of events landed me back in San Diego and, to earn money, I went back to what I was comfortable in and that was back in the kitchen."

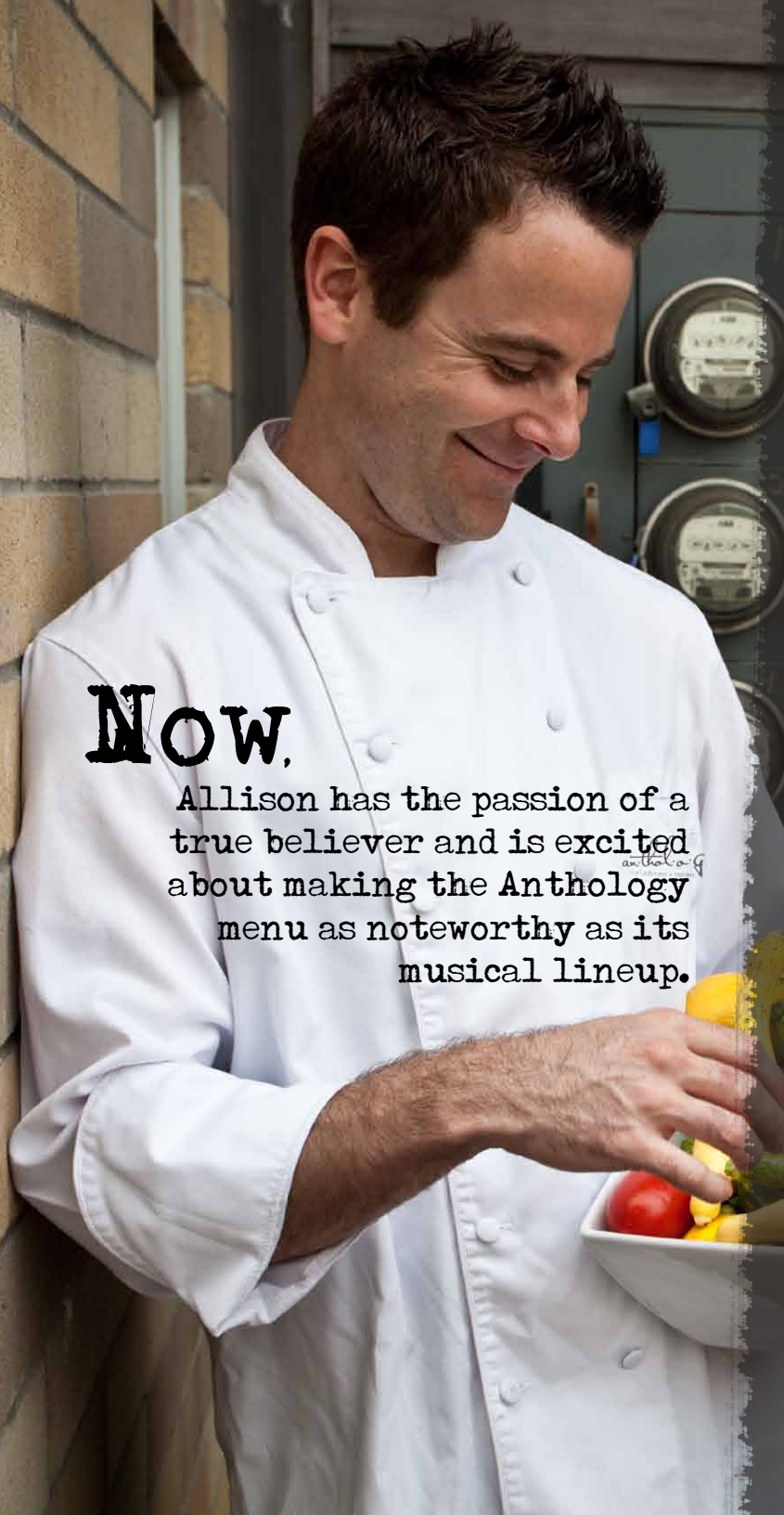
It's a place he's always been comfortable ever since he asked his mom, "What's for dinner?" and she replied, "I don't know, Todd. What's for dinner?" and let him learn through trial and error.

From that fateful moment, Allison, a native of Coronado, moved on to professional restaurants, where he worked while in high school trying to earn money for surf trips with his friends.

He started out as dish washer before working his way up through the ranks to be sous chef. Still, Allison never thought about cooking as a career until a good friend, Ken Irvine suggested he go to culinary school.

Irvine introduced Allison to James Boyce, a top chef at Mary Elaine's at The Phoenician Resort and Spa, a highly regarded restaurant in Arizona, who became like a second father.

"He changed my whole world view on what being a chef is all about," Allison said. "It's more than writing a menu. You have to mentor. You have to coach. You have to go out into the dining room and mingle. You have to make a connection with your customers or they're not going to come back."



## Now,

Allison has the passion of a true believer and is excited about making the Anthology menu as noteworthy as its musical lineup.

"Yeah, your food will speak for itself, but there's more than that. You have to talk with your servers. It has to be more than, 'What do you want?' It's, 'Hey, have you tried the risotto?' Tell the customers your favorite dishes. Tell them what's in season. Tell them about that particular fish or vegetable and why it's so much better in the summer than the winter."

Allison has learned his lessons well. So well in fact that he has already earned such prestigious honors as the Mobile 5-Star, the AAA 5 Diamond and the Grand Wine Spectator Award.

But the road to Allison's success has brought him back home to San Diego for the first time in 12 years as Anthology's superstar chef. He is excited to see how his hometown has changed since he's been gone.

"San Diego definitely needed time to develop into more of a restaurant destination like New York, Chicago or San Francisco," he said. "San Diego didn't have that 12 years ago and that's why I left. I wanted to see what this business really had to offer. I wanted to be challenged and yelled at by a big French chef, and be threatened, and learn what it was like to be in a serious professional kitchen."

"I think if I had stayed in San Diego, I would have stayed in my normal rut of surfing and hanging

out with my friends and just going to work for a paycheck."

Now, Allison has the passion of a true believer and is excited about making the Anthology menu as noteworthy as its musical lineup. He will do this by introducing such signature dishes as Cranberry-Pistachio Pesto and through his unusual use of Harissa spice, a chili paste made from the North African Piri Piri pepper.

Still, Allison – who plays piano, drums and guitar – wants to give himself plenty of room to improvise.

"My menu will change seasonally," he promised. "Once I see a dish come through the pass more than 500 times, I don't want to see it anymore. There's just too much food to be stuck on one item."

Music fans can also expect the nightly specials to offer tastes compatible with the musical guests.

"Music has a huge impact on food," he said. "If you're listening to some conga drums, you're not going to want Mediterranean Sea bass; you're going to be thinking about drinking a pina colada and having some plantains. It has a huge influence. Music and food both have the ability to take you to an area, even if you've never been there."

