



### John Toulze – Managing Partner/President

John Toulze is a native of Northern California from a third generation French family. Cooking was, and continues to be, a strong passion in his family life. John started his career in hospitality at Viansa Winery in Sonoma in 1994. After several years of cooking and wine sales, John left Viansa winery to help Sondra Bernstein open the girl & the fig restaurant in Glen Ellen. At the girl & the fig, John's role was varied as he divided his work between the sous chef and floor manager. During the second year of business, John took over the kitchen as the Chef de Cuisine and continued to define the restaurant's "country food with a French passion" focus.

Twenty-two plus years later, John is not only the President but also a Managing Partner. John has been essential to the opening of the original restaurants and every project that followed. He also had an important role in developing the girl & the fig's FIG FOOD product line and developed the recipes for both the girl & the fig cookbooks. The restaurants' farm to table experience grew under John's care with the organically farmed culinary garden. John believes his immersion in "the farm project," as they call it, has taught him to be a better chef, giving him an intimate understanding of what seasonality really means.

While running ESTATE (closed 2011), an Italian-themed restaurant in the historic property known as "The General's Daughter", John discovered a passion for creating salumi. He mastered the artisanal art of curing meats and continues to teach our other chefs so they can keep up with the production. Under the brand MANO FORMATE, bacon, pancetta, prosciutto, guanciale, lonzo and salami are just a few products produced in-house.

John received a Rising Star Chef award in June 2009. He also received a Good Food award in 2011 for his MANO FORMATE Coppa.

Being a completely self-taught chef, John enjoys developing new recipes, training new staff, but, most of all, understands the importance of consistency and endurance. "Food is my passion, I have been blessed to cook in the wine country where the commitment and dedication to exceptional products is of the highest importance. I am one of the lucky ones, I am able to pursue my passion and make my dreams become reality."

