

FRESH CUP

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**Peerless
Coffee**

Coffee by a chef,
for chefs

INSIDE!

Jiri MOUNTAIN

Legendary Tea of South Korea



GEORGE VUKASIN JR. outside of Peerless Coffee headquarters in Oakland, California. James Beard award-winning chef **GARY DANKO** (inset).

Coffee by a Chef, for Chefs

Trained chef George Vukasin Jr. leads **Peerless Coffee** with his food-focused palate and partnerships with top chefs.

By Lon LaFlamme

As a graduate of Le Cordon Bleu Paris, George Vukasin Jr. was rigorously trained to have an executive chef's palate for quality, consistency, and innovation. As CEO of Peerless Coffee & Tea in Oakland, California, he applies those same hospitality standards to his family's coffee company.

In addition to leading the roasting team, Vukasin sources top-scoring coffees from

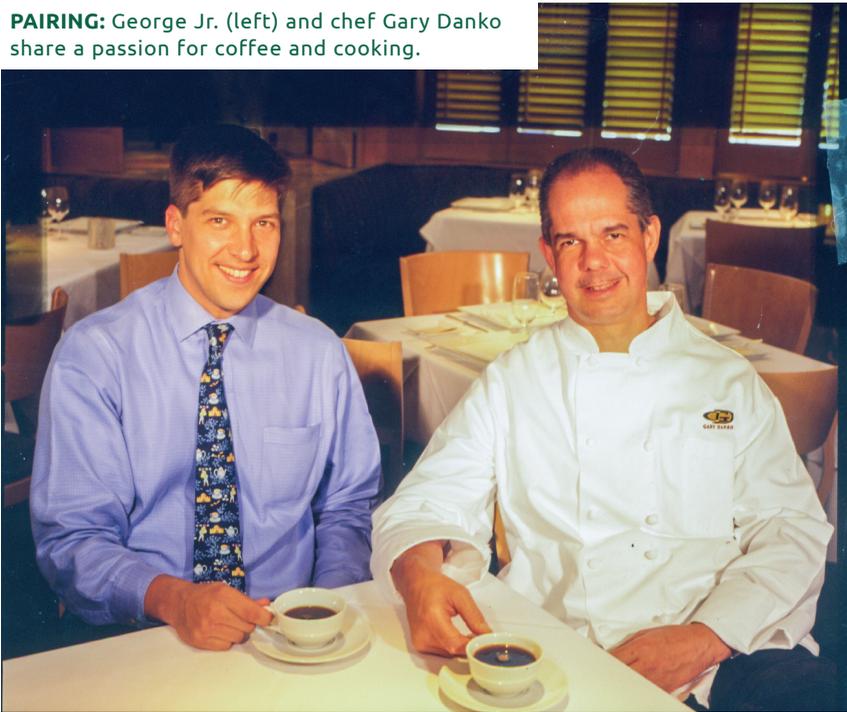
around the world. He has hosted culinary students from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park New York and Singapore to spend time at the roastery and become immersed in coffee. Over the years, culinary graduates have become clients of Peerless after opening their own restaurants.

CIA graduate and multiple James Beard award winner Gary Danko, owner of the five-star San Francisco restaurant on Fisherman's

Wharf named after him, worked closely with Vukasin to pair coffees on his dessert menu.

"Our partnership with Peerless and the Vukasins started many years ago at the Dining Room at the Ritz Carlton. We partnered with Peerless because they were able to elevate our coffee program to the level of our cuisine. When we opened Restaurant Gary Danko, we continued to work with Peerless and have enjoyed a first-class relationship ever since," Danko says.

PAIRING: George Jr. (left) and chef Gary Danko share a passion for coffee and cooking.



LIKE DANKO'S RESTAURANTS, MAJOR BOUTIQUE HOTELS ARE SHIFTING FROM COMMODITY COFFEE TO CRAFT COFFEE TO MEET GUEST EXPECTATIONS.



LE CORDON BLEU Paris, graduating class of 1996.



Like Danko's restaurants, major boutique hotels are shifting from commodity coffee to craft coffee to meet guest expectations. Hyatt, Hilton, and Ritz Carlton properties have worked with coffee roasters to add their own private label coffee and open kiosks in hotel lobbies.

In 2019, Peerless will celebrate 95 years of roasting craft coffee for premier individual and chain restaurants and hotels, including resort hotel and golf resorts like Pebble Beach and Pelican Hill Resort. All of Peerless's Pacific Hospitality Resorts properties, from Napa Valley to Southern California and Hawaii, have added craft coffee to the menu.

"Craft coffee is the fastest-growing part of the restaurant industry. When people taste the difference between standard brews versus more distinct terroir-based coffees, chefs and restaurant owners switch from free refills in favor of craft coffee as a profit and customer experience," Vukasin says.

He blends his tasting skills with his cooking background to match coffees with various food items and create pairing menus for some clients.

"Considering we source some of the world's best and highest scoring beans, it means restaurant owners are spending more for their coffee, but getting this smart investment back via cappuccinos, lattes, hand-poured coffees, which match the quality of their food," Vukasin says.

Vukasin also brings specialty coffee to fine dining via dessert pairings. Similar to wine pairings, Vukasin works directly with executive chefs to pair single-origin espressos and blends with dessert menu items.

"A number of blends I have created have milk or dark chocolate flavor notes that perfectly complement any chocolate-based dessert," Vukasin says. "Distinct citrus and berry flavor notes in many single-origin coffees, like the easily recognizable blueberry flavor notes in Ethiopian coffee, are a great way to introduce the idea to chefs," Vukasin says.

To meet the growing demand for cold brew nitrogen draft coffee drinks, many of Peerless's clients now offer cold brew nitro on tap, with some even offering several different proprietary blends.

Peerless developed a two-parts water, one-part cold brew concentrate to not only serve on tap in the restaurants, and added a cold brew tap for the refreshment carts for golfers.

Peerless crafted a 64-ounce plastic bottle cold brew concentrate that is shelf stable for six months. It was so popular in the hospitality industry, from colleges and restaurants to California hotel and golf resorts, that they added a 32-ounce consumer size for the supermarket chains that sell Peerless coffee in bags and bulk. »



“This breakthrough process allows the heavy volume of drink orders to be filled without having to cycle through the typical 17-hour cold brew process,” Vukasin says.

Vukasin also works with mixologists to develop cold brew cocktails that increase sales and expand menu offerings on progressive fine dining menus.



SEEING THE COFFEE EXPERIENCE FROM ALL SIDES AND APPLYING HIS KNOWLEDGE FOR FINE AND FAST CASUAL DINING ENVIRONMENTS DRIVES VUKASIN AND PEERLESS COFFEE.



Seeing the coffee experience from all sides and applying his knowledge for fine and fast casual dining environments drives Vukasin and Peerless Coffee.

“I worked alongside my dad at Peerless when I was growing up, just as he had when his father started Peerless Coffee and Tea in 1924. Whether it was going to origin or Friday cuppings, specialty coffee started running through my veins,” Vukasin says. “It is in my DNA to strive for perfection.”

MORE INFO >> www.peerlesscoffee.com



THROUGH THE YEARS: (clockwise from top left) George judging coffee at Best of Chiapas, Mexico in 2008; George and Wolfgang Puck tasting espressos; with George Sr. cupping coffees; George at Peerless Coffee & Tea; George visiting a coffee farm in Guatemala in 2015.

