



## Brandon

Brandon Felix has lived in Cairns 12 years. He started his cooking journey in Western Australia during his mid-teens, starting out in a bakery in the far north town of Karratha. Brandon cites that cooking wasn't always his chosen career path but...it was something that came natural to him.

Brandon is of Dutch-Indonesian / Aboriginal- Torres Strait Islander decent and draws on influences of both cultures when creating dishes or menus. He formally apprenticed in Cairns, QLD and once signed off, took off to Melbourne to be part of the opening team for Nobu -Melbourne, a joint venture between Celebrity chef Nobu Matsuhisa and actor Robert Deniro. Whilst in Melbourne he worked for a number of high profile chefs including Neil Perry, Phillipa Sibley and Ben Shewry, the majority of this work being unpaid or voluntary to gain & enjoy the experience.

Brandon's travels took him to the snowy countryside of NSW and further to that, a winter season in Fukushima, Japan. Admittedly there for the snow, it wasn't long before he was working for restaurant group Sawakami & Son.

Upon his return to Cairns Brandon took over the reins as Executive chef within the Rydges Group before a posting at Trinity Beach "hot spot" L'unico. It was after this, where, an opportunity arose for Brandon to take over an inner city establishment where he first met now business partner Dimitri Reid and the idea of a cooking school first emerged.

## Dimitri

Enter the Landscapes of Java, Indonesia. Green rainforests, rice fields, fish farms, rivers, and natural beauty as far as the eye can see. This is the birthplace of Chef, Dimitri Reid.

Dimitri's family migrated to Sydney, Australia in the late 1970's. His father was in the building industry and his mother... a professional Chef. Many memories were made feasting on Indonesian street food in Bandung, Indonesia, to hanging out in his mother's Commercial Kitchens. At a very young age and during a time when his mother was head Chef, all of the drama and excitement really ignited his passion for cooking, he loved the idea of food, and cooking something from scratch, flavours were endless marriages that he would just lose himself in. As a young man, Dimitry would read and cook for hours.

At fifteen years of age, Dimitry started his Chef's apprenticeship at Sydney's premier five star hotel, Quay West Hotel, finishing at the iconic Novotel Darling Harbour, Sydney at the age of 19. After the four years training he came to Cairns taking up a position at the Crystal Twig Restaurant, Matson Plaza to then taking on as Executive Sous Chef role at the Tamarind, Sofitel Reef Hotel Casino, Cairns. All this achieved by the age of 24.

Looking for new challenges, Dimitri opened his own restaurant - The Java Queen, wine bar & galleria, South of Brisbane, a Boutique 70 seater restaurant with an eclectic cosmopolitan cuisine.

After five seasons at JQ in Brisbane, Dimitry sold the restaurant and moved back to the peace and tranquillity of Cairns. The laid back lifestyle of Cairns was a very attractive part of his decision to move back. Soon there after, was introduced to Brandon Felix and the next chapter began.