

## Vermilion Culinary Team - 2016

### **Rohini Dey, Culinary Director/Owner/Founder**

As the creator of Vermilion's Indian-Latin concept and vision, Rohini developed the original menu, continues to push its evolution, and actively shapes every dish or drink served at Vermilion (conceptualization, testing, finalization, travel inspirations) along with her culinary team.

### **Javier Alvarez, Chef de Cuisine**

Having spent his entire childhood in Nicaragua, Javier's primary culinary influences are his grandmother and mother's cooking. Very early on Javier knew that he would like to pursue cooking beyond his passion and turn it into his career. After completing his degree at ENAH (Escuela Nacional de Hosteleria – National School of Hospitality), Javier then went on to broaden his horizons within Latin America and cooked in fine dining kitchens in Chile. Javier has been with Vermilion for four years and brings this history to our culinary team. He prides himself on the earthy and comfort oriented Latin dishes he has contributed to Vermilion's relaunch new menu.

### **Titik Suprapti, Sous Chef**

Born and raised in Indonesia, and a happy single mother of a 12 year old, Titik is passionate about the cuisine of her heritage and enjoys developing it with an international twist. Armed with two culinary degrees (in culinary arts and in baking and pastry, at the International Culinary Center and The Art Institute), Titik worked extensively in pastry in several restaurants on the West Coast. She has now spent a year training at Vermilion within the Women in Culinary Leadership (WICL) James Beard Foundation Vermilion Program, absorbing the intricacies of each and every station, and contributing to our desserts. We are delighted to welcome Titik formally to this leadership position and to our culinary team family.

Over the thirteen years that Vermilion has been in existence, we have been proud to train, promote and launch many an executive chef and culinary talent to lead their own restaurants, compete in and judge food shows (Top Chef, Iron Chef, Next Iron Chef, Chopped) and continue the cycle of giving back.

## **VERMILION INDIAN-LATIN CONCEPT & CUISINE**

### **Concept –**

When asked why she chose to meld the cuisine of her Indian heritage with the boldness of Latin culture, Rohini ascribes it to “three distinct underpinnings” —

1. Primarily, I wanted to create an **intellectually provocative** cuisine both clear of Indian dining stereotypes and the French overhang. And to overtly celebrate the vibrant flavors that Indian and Latin cuisines are known for. So the opposite of the timid, apologetic, washed out Indian fusion renditions I had found prevalent when I opened Vermilion.

2. Vermilion's melding draws heavily from the tropical and geographical **overlap of ingredients, herbs and spices** across India, Spain & Latin America – such as coconut, tamarind, mango, lychee, papaya, beans, rice, guava, plantain, cilantro, lime, corn, rice, beans and chickpeas, saffron – all utilized extensively in both cuisines.
3. The Indian-Latin concept of Vermilion is also based on deep **historical cross-flows** and culinary influences of the Persians, Moors, Spanish, Portuguese, and waves of direct migration. Persian cuisine has shaped centuries of Mughal regimes in India (all the Tandoor fare, kababs, and naans and rich nut based north Indian gravies). And over seven centuries of Moorish occupation of Spain, percolated through the rest of the New World Latin America (bringing ingredients such as sharbats/agua frescas, pullao/pilaf/paella, cilantro, mint, cumin, cloves, saffron, rose, nuts). The Portuguese occupied parts of the western Malabar coast of India for over four centuries (bringing chili pepper and potato to India!) and Brazil's Bahian region as well. Indian migration to large parts of Central and South America has created a further cross-pollination of cuisines.

Our goal at Vermilion is to offer a cuisine that is assertive and memorable. On the spectrum between finesse and satisfying, we have consciously chosen to lean towards the latter. This is not about being pretentious or creating an ode to our kitchens. We seek to celebrate the boldness and warmth of both these cultures in an upscale sensual ambiance.

### **Cuisine -**

There are three sources of inspiration for Vermilion's indian-latin cuisine, developed by Vermilion's culinary teams across NYC and Chicago with Rohini:

1. **Original vision:** Rohini's original business plan and vision for the restaurant included many items such as the Tandoori skirt steak, Tamarind ribs, Empanadas, Ceviche, and the Lobster Portuguese. Some staples on the indian section of the menu draw from her childhood across India (kababs, naans, north indian dhaba fare – the tiffin butter chicken, chaats pani puri).
2. **Research and tastings:** Both kitchen teams across NYC and Chicago are continually innovating and researching new dishes.
3. **Ongoing travels** – Rohini is continually traveling and drawing inspiration from travels to Sri Lanka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, Trinidad & Tobago, Mexico, Spain (Brazilian caldeirada, Peruvian ceviche, Chimichurri steak).

These innovations are also reflected in Vermilion "herb & spice" cocktail program and the boutique global wine list, with an emphasis on Latin wines.

## BIOGRAPHY

**rohini dey, ph.d.**

**owner/founder/culinary director    vermilion nyc & chicago**

A leading restaurateur, a proponent of Indian cuisine with her unique Latin twist, and an avid supporter of women – former economist and management consultant Rohini Dey straddles the worlds of business and philanthropy across the US and India.

Rohini's career spans several phases:

- She taught in *Academia* and has a Master's degree in Economics from the Delhi School of Economics, and a Doctorate in Management Science from the University of Texas. Her dissertation was on the impact of foreign direct and portfolio investment flows on economic growth and development. She published on corporate governance.
- She worked at the *World Bank* in Washington, D.C. where she managed projects in foreign investment and coauthored a book on infrastructure privatization.
- At *McKinsey & Co.*, Rohini's management consulting project experience and knowledge development spanned a range of industries with a focus on growth.
- As an *Entrepreneur*, Dey has combined her business credentials with her passion for food by establishing restaurants in Chicago and the heart of Manhattan.
- As a *Writer*, she wrote a series on restaurants "From the Gut" for the Chicago Sun Times Splash celebrity page, she writes for Huffington Post, she has written op-eds for Crain's Business, and on Indian cuisine as a soft power for Reimagining India (McKinsey collection of essays).

Rohini was inspired to break away from her management consulting career by a desire to go entrepreneurial and a conviction that Indian cuisine in the United States was either confined to stereotypes, or timid and washed out. Rohini created and developed the Vermilion indian-latin concept and cuisine. She led the spectrum of entrepreneurial activities across her NYC & Chicago entities. As founder, owner and culinary director of Vermilion, Rohini oversees the operations and culinary evolution of her restaurants.

Since inception, Vermilion has been acclaimed as "Best New Restaurant" by *Chicago Magazine, Travel & Leisure, Town & Country, USA Today, Bon Appetit, Wine Enthusiast, 3 stars Tribune* among others. For its pioneering cuisine, woman-led team and Rohini's entrepreneurial journey, she and Vermilion have been profiled in *The Financial Times, Time, Oprah Magazine, Fortune, FSB, Business Week, Esquire, Crain's, Sante, Shelter, Chicago Tribune, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, BBC World, CBS News, NBC, Business Today, More* among others. Rohini was awarded the "Woman of Distinction" award by Children's Hope, Woman of Distinction by Varli Culinary awards, and "Entrepreneur of the year – India" by the City of Chicago. Rohini was selected by the *Economic Times* as one of the thirteen "Overseas Indians set to shine even more." She is on the Board of Trustees and the National Advisory Board of the James Beard Foundation, a member of the US State Department Diplomacy Culinary Initiative, and on The Advisory Council of the Illinois Restaurant Association.

As a woman restaurateur, Rohini is a staunch supporter of women in business and mentorship and education of girls on a global level. She co-founded the James Beard Foundation Vermilion Women in Culinary Leadership Program (WICL), backed by a roster of incredible restaurateur-mentors and celebrity (CFW) "Chefs for Women." She founded the non-profit MEdG-Educate Girls Globally to which all her writing proceeds go. Dey is an active member of The Chicago Network (TCN), International Women's Forum (IWF), the Women's Forum of New York (WFNY), and the Economic Club of Chicago (ECC). She actively hosts and has served as a keynote speaker for business conferences and lifestyle events across innovation, culinary, entrepreneurship, and women in business. Rohini stays connected to academia by engaging actively with the Entrepreneurial departments of leading Business Schools (University of Chicago, Kellogg, Columbia University).

Rohini is known in the lifestyle space (50 most beautiful Chicagoans – Chicago Magazine, Beautiful Homes – Chicago Social, Entertaining with Flair – Chicago Tribune, Women of Influence – Michigan Avenue magazine). She was one of the ten Chicagoans featured on the City of Chicago’s video to welcome NATO delegates and present at the summit. On a personal level, Rohini is equally passionate about all four of her babies (both her daughters, plus restaurants), is an avid reader, loves to dine out, enjoys travel, running, swimming (Chicago Marathon, Half Ironman Triathlon), amateur squash and chess, and has accomplished a personal dream - climbing Mount Kilimanjaro.