

Q&A with The Yacht Chef aka Dean Harrison

The 20th of October is International Chef day so to kick off the beginning of this week we are catching up with Insta Famous [The Yacht Chef](#), also known as Dean Harrison. Dean has worked on Superyachts for the last ten years and is currently on Rotation on 60m [M/Y Arience](#). In this interview, we spoke with Dean about his previous ten years of experience as a yacht chef and how he built up his 21,000 followers on his Social Media platform.

http://https://www.instagram.com/p/CPdXST_rNZ5/

Tell me about your recent travels.

I'm fortunate, my current position is rotational, and I don't have a base. I spend most of my time travelling whilst I'm off and eating my way around the world. My most recent destination being Mexico, America, Brasil and Australia. I have recently come back and joined M/Y Arience for the final charter of the season cruising the Balearics, which has been a great experience.

How did you land your first Yacht Chef position?

It was a little bit of luck. My career started on dive boats in the Great Barrier Reef. I completed three years of working on these to test my sea legs and ensure I didn't get seasick. I then began applying for the bigger yachts, all based in the South Pacific, persistence paid off, and I eventually landed a chef/deckhand gig on a 30-meter yacht. I have stuck to what I believe in throughout my career and grafted my way to the top.

Private or charter, what's your preference?

I would have to say, charter! I started private, and that is where I relished. I felt like I was part of the family, and for three years, in a way, I was. The family took me spare fishing and diving in some incredible destinations. I feel very fortunate to have had these experiences. However, I am now on 60m Arience, a charter vessel, and you know it's hard to beat the tips! We really are appreciated what we do for these families. I also love the verity. One week you looking after Russians and the next you have a Swedish family and then the following you have Americans. It provides such an array of challenges and keeps our work interesting.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CTWyGtiLsMt/>

What's your favourite galley you have worked in so far?

Arience, 60 meters really is a perfect size! The yacht is massive, and they have made some significant changes to the crew areas, making it an enjoyable and more practical place to work in. I have a huge dry store and cool room, I'm really spoilt on here.

The Superyacht Industry takes you to all corners of the globe. What has been your favourite destination so far?

There are so many beautiful destinations in the world, but I really can't go past Raja Ampat, Indonesia. That was a special place for me. It is so remote, and the sea life is just

incredible.

https://www.instagram.com/p/BgA9hx_A57n/

Do you have a food hero?

I wouldn't say I have a food hero. There are so many fantastic chefs in the world! The ones I admire the most are the plant-based forward-moving chefs. It's such an old age perception to believe that every meal must have meat, and it is amazing how creative these modern chefs are. They do put out some incredible plates.

Which Plant-Based Chef stands out to you?

It would have to be [Chef Rene Redzepi](#). He pushes for plant-based food because he knows the future. He is a true talent and is renowned for creating really beautiful pieces. It is becoming well known that having meat with every meal isn't sustainable. Anyone can cook up a piece of meat and make it delicious, but someone who can turn a carrot into something amazing is pretty spectacular!

My second choice would be Daniel Humm, the head chef and owner of [Eleven Madison Park](#) In New York. He has been criticized for going plant-based, but I think he will be extremely successful if he sticks to it.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CQRJJ5NFfox/>

You have created quite a following on your platform; was this

intentional?

It was never my intention as I was never a social media person; I was even pretty late to the iPhone party. I have always loved to document and carry a video camera with me. Instagram was just a place I could now put all the images I had taken. I honestly think I was one of the first to document a lot of behind-the-scenes of a yacht chef, which people found interesting. So I guess, in a way, it was just good timing.

What would you call Australian cuisine?

Australia is so young that we don't have a rich history of food. What we do have is one of the most multicultural nations. Because of this, we have what's called Modern Australian food. For me, it's everything amazing from around the world, taken and refined.

Where in the world have you travelled to that stands out as being the culinary leader and why?

I know it may sound bias, but it has to be Australia. Being such a young country, the chefs there have learnt from different cuisines all over the world. We truly take the best from their dishes, build and experiment.

If you had to pick a country outside of Australia to visit for the food, where would it be?

I couldn't name a country, but I will give you two cities.

Barcelona and New York both have several fantastic restaurants!

https://www.instagram.com/p/Bk4d_hEjeI2/

We know you have been on a local produce journey recently. What did this entail, and what does local produce mean to you?

This was actually for a TV project I am developing, and it was such an unexpected, incredible experience revisiting where I grew up as an adult. You appreciate things a lot more! We are so lucky in Australia. We have every type of climate within arm's reach, and there's nothing we can't grow!

Will you be incorporating any of the products you've discovered into your future dishes?

Most produce I come across appear in my dishes at some point. It's hard not to think about what you can create out of something as a chef. When you're exposed to fantastic produce, your brain is constantly moving at a hundred miles an hour on how you can turn it into a beautiful dish.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CS2cy4ELnrj/>

Do you embrace the local cuisines and apply them to your work when working onboard?

Always! When the local produce surrounds you, it's hard not

to!

Three galley gadgets Yacht Chefs shouldn't live without?

- Thermomix – It's a blender on steroids!
- A Rational/Combi Oven – I do love them. It just makes life easier.
- A Decent Vacuum Pack Machine – Couldn't live without one now that I have had one. They are so handy for prep and backup food.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/ByTM7S4AC3j/>

What is the most challenging part of being a superyacht chef?

I think it's the pressure to make every cuisine and food request to the client's taste. The client has an image or taste from a particular place, and it's your job to recreate that.

I once had a client ask for a particular corn beef hash dish they regularly had at a 5-star hotel. I attempted three times from the verbal descriptions they gave me, and I couldn't nail it. They sent me a picture on the 4th attempt, and I got it straight away! So I guess it's the expectation of giving them something they had in a moment of their life and it being exactly the same as what they had had previously.

Where has been your most challenging destination to

provision?

Probably the South Pacific, where I started my career. I am pretty happy I began my career there and not the other way around, if I am honest.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CTq7SP-sDmE/>

You've been a superyacht chef for ten years now. Do you think you could ever return to land and work in a traditional kitchen?

Honestly, it would be hard, and I don't think I would unless it was for a unique project or to start my own restaurant.

Lastly, are you able to let us into a snippet of your exciting new project that's in the making?

I can't give too much away as it's still in the works. It's for the yacht chefs. So watch this space!

To keep up with what Dean is up to follow him [@theyachtchef](#). For more interviews like this one visit, [here](#).