

*The Next Hot Chefs*

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TALENT-FILLED  
DINING  
SCENE.

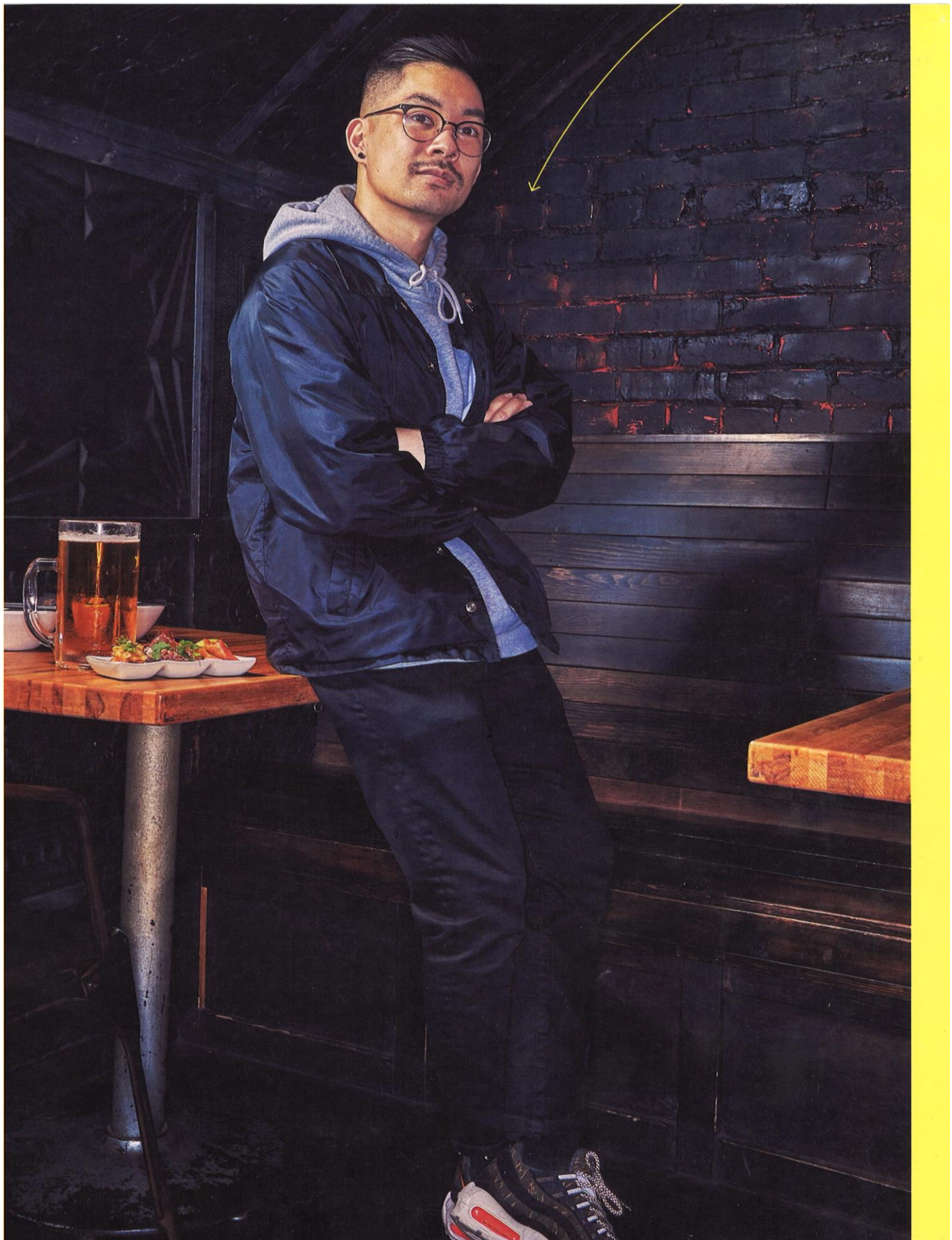


BY CARLTON CANARY



BY ROSIN SAEZ  
AND ALLECIA VERMILLION

Kitchen culture is surging toward change—less yelling, more inclusive leadership. The restaurant realm's notoriously grueling work, however, remains steadfast. So does the city's culinary talent. That's why, every year, *Seattle Met* profiles five rising star chefs—all of whom are younger than 40 and don't yet run a place of their own—dedicated to creating great food in this town. While they labor mostly behind the scenes (diving into burger R&D or fermenting off-menu fresno chile hot sauce), these chefs' skills shine through at some of the best restaurants in Seattle.



# Ethan Leung

Sous Chef, Ben Paris

**C**OOKING CAN BE A LOT LIKE BREAK DANCING: ORIGINALITY IS key and nailing the basics is nonnegotiable. At least that's how Ethan Leung sees it. "There are all these foundations that breaking has that can be applied to cooking in a way."

Such discipline was useful in his brief career as an engineer, too, but Leung gave up the comfortable yet existentially unsatisfying Bellevue job when he realized he only wanted to be in one place—the kitchen. As a college student at Bellingham's Western Washington University, he took on his first food gig at a sushi restaurant. The precision-minded Leung made flash cards about sushi roll components and timed himself for efficiency. That work ethic propelled him through his flourishing career, from a subsequent gig making ramen to far-flung stages in upscale Australian restaurants to his nomadic sous chef status at two of Brendan McGill's Pacific Northwest establishments with "Hitchcock" in the name—specifically the cafe and restaurant proper on Bainbridge Island.

Now Leung is the sous chef for Ben Paris, by far the best of Seattle's new crop of hotel restaurants downtown, where he repurposes compost-bound fresno chile bits into a versatile fermented hot sauce to top meticulously architected eggs or to punch up an aioli.

He's long been the pupil of executive chef Quinton Stewart. Leung's worked under his mentor off and on for five years in various restaurants, following him from Bellevue's 99 Park and eventually to Ben Paris. "I knew on the first day I met him, he was different than the other cooks," says Stewart. "He has a quality you can't really teach." Much like a break dancer's swagger, it has to come naturally.

## WHAT THE BOSS SAYS

**"Ethan was my first choice for the sous chef position at Ben Paris," says executive chef Quinton Stewart. "He just embodies all the qualities that you would want in every cook—he's solid, incredibly steadfast, he leads by example."**



The week in Ethan: pork and chicken liver pate, beer mustard, apricot mostarda; braised oxtail (aka kare kare), eggplant, bok choy, peanut sauce; mushroom tart; tomato gazpacho, pickled pearl onions, nasturtium; vanilla panna cotta, coriander dacquoise, basil oil.

## Life, a la Carte

**HOMETOWN:** Silverdale, Washington

**AGE:** 29

**EDUCATION:** Western Washington University

**OTHER TRAINING:** Staged at Automata and Victor Churchill butcher shop in Australia.

**WORK HISTORY:** Hokkaido Ramen Santouka, 99 Park Restaurant, Trove, Scout, Hitchcock, Cafe Hitchcock.

## Where Everybody Knows Your Name.

**Suika** on Capitol Hill is like Ethan Leung's Cheers—he walks in and is immediately greeted like family. The izakaya restaurant serves his perennial favorites. "I always get their bibimbap, whether it's the pork belly or the eel."