

## PRIVATE CLUBS

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**Chef Q+A**

## Erik Anderson

Cooking maestro dishes on his new West Coast gig



**I**T'S NOT OFTEN a chef hands over his creative control, but Daniel Patterson, owner of the small, boundary-pushing **Coi restaurant** in San Francisco, isn't your typical chef. Patterson has helped pave the road for chefs to take risks in the kitchen, and under his leadership Coi has become an incubator for some of the country's top talents. In 2015, Matthew Kirkley took the culinary reins of Patterson's flagship and last year his cooking earned Coi its first three Michelin-star rating, making it one of just seven San Francisco restaurants with that honor. Last November, the baton was passed to Erik Anderson, who made his name at the Catbird Seat in Nashville and is an alumnus of Noma in Copenhagen and the French Laundry in California's Napa Valley. **Writer Jen Murphy** recently talked to Anderson about Michelin pressure, his love of fowl, and the importance of being challenged in the kitchen.

**Most chefs dream of owning their own restaurant. Last spring you opened the well-received Grand Café in Minneapolis. Why leave?**

At the Grand, the focus was on updated French classics. That is the kind of food I personally love to eat but it's not where my heart is as a chef. I wanted to be cooking at a more technical and intellectual level, even if it meant cooking for someone else.

**How do you respect the soul of Coi while still putting your imprint on the menu?**

The food at Coi has always been rooted in technique, and I want to stay true to that. Daniel's cooking style was very vegetable-centric and local, whereas Matt's was seafood-centric and more French. I have a thing for birds, so expect dishes like pressed pigeon.

**Patterson has a reputation as a more cerebral chef. What has been your biggest takeaway since starting at Coi?**

Daniel has an incredible palette. I love watching how he tastes food and hearing his philosophy on seasoning.

**You debuted your new tasting menu in January. Is there a dish that sums up your cooking style?**

The Tourte L'Ambroisie, featuring duck, sweetbreads, foie gras, Armagnac prune, and black truffle. It's an homage to the eponymous three-Michelin-starred restaurant in France.

**Kirkley stepped down just after Michelin awarded Coi its third Michelin star. Is there pressure to keep that star?**

I try not to focus on it, but I'd be lying if I said it's not in the back of my mind. Stars are truly for the chef. Matt has three. I have zero. Coi will be reviewed again by October. Michelin traditionally knocks a star off when there is a chef change, but if I open with two stars that's a good thing.



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