

Walter Leffler



Director of Culinary Operations
The Olde Mill Inn and Grain House Restaurant
225 Route 202
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

Whether it's in the pages of *Nation's Restaurant News*, *The New York Times*, *Hotel Business*, *Food Arts* or *Art Culinaire Magazine*, the name of Executive Chef Walter Leffler has shown up in the hottest food media in the nation. Leffler, who is currently the Director of Culinary Operations at the Olde Mill Inn and Grain House Restaurant, orchestrates, consults and directs teams committed to the development of profitable and quality oriented ventures dedicated to excellence. He is known for preparing outstanding cuisine that has delighted royalty as well as every United States President since Richard M. Nixon.

Leffler's passion for educating others on the finer points of cuisine, service and sanitation is apparent in his extensive list of credentials and in his dynamic hands-on teaching style. He has served as an adjunct professor at Middlesex County College in Edison, NJ for ten years, and is on the advisory boards of Sullivan and Montclair State Universities as well as Middlesex and Union County colleges. A graduate of Johnson & Wales University, Leffler has extended studies at the University of Houston for management as well as the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park for Asian food and culture. Chef Leffler often returns to his alma mater as a guest speaker.

Leffler, a true veteran from the worlds of both *Mobil-Star* and *AAA-Diamond* programs, has honed his 30-years of experience in hotels and restaurants on the cutting edge of the food industry. He recently assisted in opening and branding a new 72-thousand square-foot IACC certified conference and catering facility, worked with a private restaurant group in achieving *top-ten restaurants in NJ* award and is currently aiding in the redevelopment of an 85-acre multifaceted facility on Staten Island in New York City. Previous to going out on his own, Leffler was formerly the Executive Chef & Director of Food & Beverage of the Seelbach Hotel in Louisville Kentucky, the official home of the Kentucky Derby and Kentucky's first and only AAA Five-Diamond restaurant, the Oakroom. Prior to leading that food and beverage team, he was the Executive Chef of The Hilton at Short Hills Hotel and Spa in Short Hills, New Jersey. Walter was a key member of the culinary team that first earned the coveted AAA Five-Diamond Award for The Dining Room at the Mobil Four-Star/Five-Diamond rated hotel, as well as achieving the Four-Diamond Award for the hotel's Terrace Restaurant.

Other career highlights include the Willard Inter-Continental Hotel, Washington DC; The Peabody Hotel, Memphis, Tennessee; The Center Club, Baltimore, Maryland; Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress, Orlando, Florida; and The Empress Room in Orlando, Florida.

Within the hospitality industry, Chef Leffler has been a trailblazer in bringing exciting, flavorful vegetarian cuisine into the mainstream in restaurants, special events and meeting menus with an acute focus on healthful and restorative cuisines that pay close attention to food allergies and medically suggestive diets such as for celiac or diabetes. He has also built a reputation for mixing familiar, comforting ingredients with thrilling elements and presentations, dramatically lowering overhead costs while keeping standards at extremely high levels. Chef Leffler, who was born and raised just outside of New York City, knew he wanted to be a chef and educator at a very early age. After an intriguing stint as a performer and cook for circus juggling troupes, as an assistant in a small French café and as the private cook for Mr. Malcolm Forbes for a summer, Leffler opted for formal training.

Walter's style has garnered awards in the many culinary salons and exhibitions in which he has competed. He has won both the Silver Medal & Silver Diploma in the Hot Food Competition sponsored by the Nation's Capital Chef's Association, Washington, DC; and the Silver Medal & Silver Diploma in the Hot Food Served Cold competition sponsored by the American Chefs Federation, held at a Washington DC food show. In early 1997 Leffler was inducted as a member of the prestigious *Chaine des Rotisseurs* and since has been elevated to a level of Vice Conseiller Culinaire. He is an active board member of the international *Escoffier Society* and is currently writing a book on survival in the culinary field.