

# Epicurean Group

## Exceptional, Conscientious Foodservice Management

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Mary Clark Bartlett cooked up the Epicurean Group with just three simple ingredients: quality, customer service and transparency. The recipe proved successful, as Epicurean Group grew to become one of Northern California's most successful foodservice management companies. Bartlett, founder and CEO of Epicurean Group, believes that putting food on the table is the last step in an exacting process.

Each Epicurean Group employee strives to ensure that every meal served and every product delivered reflects the time and care invested by local artisan producers. Epicurean Group is headquartered in Los Altos, Calif., from which the team has been serving clients throughout the Bay Area since 2003.

"In the beginning we had to overcome lots of challenges," explains Bartlett. "For example, we worked with farmers to ensure that their organic certification was in place. But you have to make sure that everything is in good order so that the client gets the quality they're paying for. As an independent and privately held company with no national purchasing requirements, we have the freedom to set high standards for socially and environmentally responsible practices."

Epicurean Group now manages over 30 restaurants and cafes with 400 dedicated employees, each of whom provide total foodservice management programs. The company serves a

wide array of clients, including corporations and businesses, universities and private schools, performing arts centers and U.S. Department of Energy facilities.

### Finding a Balance

Epicurean Group is flexible and can accommodate any client request. The Epicurean Group team has only one unbreakable rule: Source all of its ingredients from within a 150-mile radius

to preserve the food's quality and nutritional content. Epicurean Group manages and chefs work together with each client to determine the best program based on the client's individual financial and nutritional priorities. Epicurean Group's balanced approach allows for innovative solutions that make the most out of the Bay Area's bounty.

"We're very good at listening to our customers," says Bartlett. "They all have different needs and requirements. What I love about this company is that we give our employees the freedom to do what's best for their client." As budgetary and nutritional concerns change,

the team adapts to each circumstance, altering tactics to ensure the menu addresses concerns without sacrificing flavor or the quality of the locally sourced produce.

"To the delight of our clients, Epicurean Group team members are free to experiment with local ingredients," says Bartlett. "We're always in the process of creating something new."





Bartlett goes on to explain that Epicurean Group plays to its strengths by producing items from scratch, like kale chips and granola bars, using minimally processed ingredients to ensure the most wholesome results.

In addition, Epicurean Group partners with outside artisan producers. For example, instead of attempting to replicate the quality of a sprouted whole wheat bread, Epicurean Group purchases directly from a local baker, providing a dual benefit of adding a quality product to the company's offerings while expanding the producer's market penetration.

However, the company insists that its partners meet the same health and nutritional standards as Epicurean Group does for its own preparations. Artificial flavorings, artificial colorings, preservatives and partially hydrogenated oils are left out and the sodium, fat and fiber contents are carefully monitored. "We try to avoid sugar whenever we can, using less-processed alternatives like honey or agave instead," says Bartlett. The company also conducts thorough inspections of a producer's facilities to verify the safety of the production environment and ensure that certification for organic and kosher foods remains intact.

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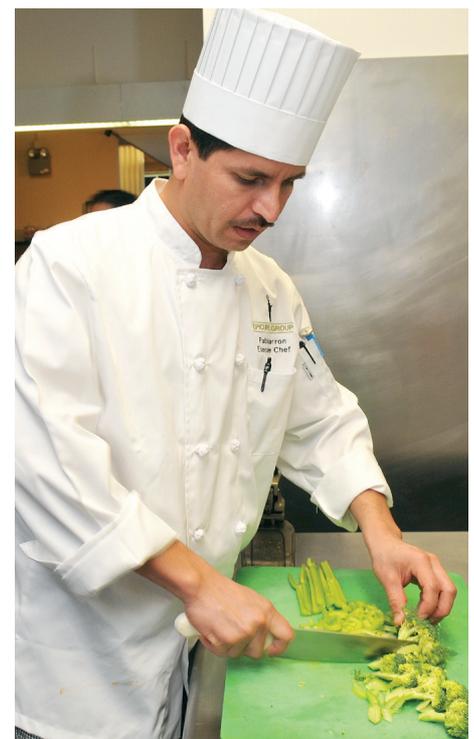
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the Bay Area Green Business Program, which requires that members to make small but effective changes such as buying recycled paper products and using less toxic cleaning products. Epicurean Group goes one step further by purchasing carbon credits to offset the impact of its catering vehicles. Team members reduce restaurants’ energy use by waiting to fire up ovens and ranges until 20 or 30 minutes before serving time in addition to efficiently managing indoor lighting.

Bartlett established the GreenTown Co-op to supply compostable take-out containers to Bay Area restaurants at a discount and eliminate Styrofoam packaging products in 2010. The co-op program also supports GreenTown Los Altos, a local non-profit, and complements its other programs that encourage local businesses to compost food waste. “Today, people are much better educated about the quality of their food and how it impacts their health and the health of their communities,” says Bartlett. “We see consumers demanding greater transparency. Composting and green waste programs are all part of the equation.”

### Sustainability at Work

Epicurean Group works to ensure the most efficient and sustainable operation possible, in addition to helping clients implement similar practices. The company is a member of

As a participating member of Slow Food, an international nonprofit that is everything fast food is not, Epicurean Group supports its advocacy and education efforts. In 2011 Epicurean Group sponsored Slow Food’s Grazing in the Grass, where experts discussed the benefits of grass-fed beef versus that raised in a commercial feeding operation, and catered a tasting following the event.

As the team has for years, Epicurean Group will continue to serve inventive, delicious and wholesome meals using only the finest local ingredients, all while creating a sustainable and flavorful food future for the people, businesses and communities of the Bay Area. •

