ZENNON WIJLENS

Location: Auckland

Meet Zennon Wijlens, the MICHELIN Star awarded Co-Owner and Head Chef of Paris Butter, and culinary expert who, alongside fellow Co-Owner Nick Honeyman, has positioned the restaurant at the forefront of Auckland's dining scene. Their collaboration has effortlessly combined a lively, innovative, yet sophisticated atmosphere, delivering a modern dining experience that resonates with patrons.

In June 2026, Paris Butter was awarded One MICHELIN Star in the inaugural MICHELIN Guide New Zealand, officially putting Zennon and Paris Butter on the global stage.

He was awarded Cuisine NZ Chef of the Year 2023/24, a recognition that highlights his dedication to local produce, sustainability, and culinary ingenuity. Under his leadership, Paris Butter earned its third "hat" in Cuisine's Good Food Guide, placing it among the top six restaurants nationwide.

Zennon develops "evolution" menus of six to eight courses that draw parallels with globally acclaimed gastronomic experiences. His cooking blends nostalgia with bold innovation, sourcing premium New Zealand produce and emphasising seasonality, texture, and flavour. His dishes are crafted with the precision of a storyteller, layering sensory elements that capture the essence of his culinary vision.

As a leader, Zennon fosters a collaborative kitchen environment, mentoring his team and building a culture of creativity and excellence. He champions industry connections through collaborative events and maintains daily discipline in fitness and stamina, which supports the demands of his role in the kitchen.

His professional journey began at sixteen when he left school to work as a kitchen hand at Barossa café in Titirangi. His determination led him to Auckland's Euro under Simon Gault, followed by roles at top Australian restaurants including Tetsuya, Etch, Momofuku, and Spice Temple. A nine-month global culinary journey saw him dine in 34 of the World's Top 50 restaurants, an experience that shaped his gastronomic style. He joined Paris Butter as Sous Chef in 2019 and took full ownership in 2023, assuming both creative and managerial control.

Zennon’s rock-and-roll aesthetic, with tattoos and a strong physical presence, mirrors the energy of his kitchen. He leads with quiet determination, favouring action over rhetoric and bringing a thoughtful, deliberate approach to his craft. His self-made journey, global culinary experiences, and resilience make him a compelling figure for storytelling in film or television, with the ability to bring authentic insight and visual richness to any project.

Would you like me to refine this into a version specifically designed for media kits and press releases?

SKILLS

Other Chef, Cooking, Cooking Demonstrations, Food Judge, Public Speaker