

Chefs Building Culinary Empires Together: The Power Couple Era

Award-winning chefs at the forefront of culinary innovation and growth in South Texas and beyond.

SAN ANTONIO, TX, UNITED STATES, May 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- At Clementine, husband-and-wife duo Chef John Russ and Pastry Chef Elise Russ have built more than a restaurant; they've built a shared vision of hospitality, creativity, and community. Together, they are reshaping San Antonio's culinary landscape while proving the strength of partnership both in and out of the kitchen.



Co-owners of Clementine

From their first conversations about opening a restaurant, John and Elise dreamed of a place that reflected their values as much as their talents. John, a New Orleans native and James Beard Award finalist, brings Southern roots and global inspiration to the menu.

“

Clementine is our family's extension of hospitality. It's not just about the food, it's about how we care for each other, our staff, and our guests.”

*Pastry Chef Elise Russ of
Clementine*

Elise, trained at Johnson & Wales and an alumna of the James Beard Women's Entrepreneurial Leadership Program, transforms her passion for pastry into refined, memorable desserts. Since opening Clementine in 2018, the couple has married these strengths into a seamless dining experience.

Guests can choose from à la carte dishes or Clementine's signature Feed Me option, a five-course off-menu journey designed by John and his team. This ever-changing menu reflects the Russes' creativity and commitment to seasonality, offering diners a taste of something new every visit.

Their partnership extends far beyond the kitchen. Elise's precision and organization complement John's inventive energy, creating balance that fuels Clementine's success. When the pandemic tested their resilience just two years after opening, the couple adapted quickly, reimagined operations, and emerged stronger, proving their bond was as unshakable as their vision.

Equally committed to their team and family, John and Elise structure Clementine around balance. Staff receive weekly updates, clear guidance, and built-in time off, while the restaurant closes on Sundays and Mondays to prioritize family life with their three children. In an industry notorious for burnout, the Russes are building a model where people come first.

With a growing list of accolades, including recognition as [Neighborhood Restaurant](#) of the Year and multiple James Beard finalist honors for John, John and Elise Russ embody a new era of restaurant entrepreneurship: intentional, collaborative, and deeply rooted in community.

Clementine isn't just one of San Antonio's top restaurants - it's proof of what's possible when love, resilience, and vision come together at the table.

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Executive Chef of Clementine



Pastry Chef of Clementine

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