

Three-Michelin-Star Chef Aitor Zabala Delivers TEDxBeverlyGrove Talk on Endurance and Rebuilding Somni

Owner and Executive Chef of Somni shares the discipline that carried him through the restaurant's closure and return to West Hollywood

WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA, UNITED STATES, August 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Aitor Zabala, Owner and Executive Chef of the three-Michelin-star restaurant [Somni](#), delivered a talk at [TEDxBeverlyGrove](#) 2026 on the discipline that carried him through one of the most difficult stretches of his career.

Zabala spoke under the TEDxBeverlyGrove 2026 theme "Reimagining the Possible," describing a morning in October 2021 when his sous-chef resigned and the restaurant space he had chosen to reopen Somni in fell through on the same day. Sitting with his coffee that morning, Zabala considered stopping altogether. Instead, a single sentence arrived and became the rule that carried him forward: not today, wait one more day.

Zabala's talk traced the years leading up to that moment, including Somni's original 2018 opening in Beverly Hills, its closure during the pandemic, and nearly four years spent largely alone in a small test kitchen without a dining room or guests.

"Reimagining the possible doesn't start with inspiration," Zabala told the TEDxBeverlyGrove audience. "It starts with endurance."

Zabala described rebuilding Somni not as an attempt at perfection, but as an attempt at honesty, a smaller, closer restaurant built to reflect who he actually was. Seven months after Somni reopened in West Hollywood, the Michelin Guide awarded the restaurant Three Michelin Stars. The recognition placed Somni among California's highest-rated restaurants and marked one of the most closely watched restaurant returns in the state.



Chef/Owner, Somni



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Zabala told the TEDxBeverlyGrove audience.

Aitor Zabala is Owner and Executive Chef of Somni, a three-Michelin-star restaurant in West Hollywood. Born in Barcelona, he trained at three-Michelin-star Akelarre before joining El Bulli, where he spent four years in the kitchen and elite test kitchen. After a decade as Creative Director at José Andrés' ThinkFoodGroup, Zabala opened Somni in Beverly Hills in 2018, earning two Michelin stars before the pandemic forced its closure. He reopened

Somni in West Hollywood in 2024 and, seven months later, earned Three Michelin Stars.

Zabala's talk was part of the TEDxBeverlyGrove 2026 speaker series and will be released online in the coming months.

About TEDxBeverlyGrove

TEDxBeverlyGrove is an independently organized TED event devoted to ideas that transform culture, leadership, and human potential. The 2026 theme, "Reimagining the Possible," invited leaders across disciplines to rethink how we navigate uncertainty, rebuild from loss, and discover what becomes possible when endurance replaces inspiration.

About Chef Aitor Zabala

Aitor Zabala is Owner and Executive Chef of Somni, a three-Michelin-star restaurant in West Hollywood. Born in Barcelona, he trained at three-Michelin-star Akelarre before joining El Bulli, where he spent four years in the kitchen and elite test kitchen. After a decade as Creative Director at José Andrés' ThinkFoodGroup, Zabala opened Somni in Beverly Hills in 2018, earning two Michelin stars before the pandemic forced its closure. He reopened Somni in West Hollywood in 2024 and, seven months later, earned three Michelin stars, becoming the first Spanish chef to achieve this distinction outside Spain and the first to receive all three stars simultaneously.

[About Marvin V. Acuna](#)

Marvin V. Acuna is a TEDx Organizer and Producer. In that role, he curates speakers, ideas, and the architecture of a high-trust live stage. Separate from his work as a TEDx producer, Acuna advises leaders, founders, attorneys, and public figures as a speaking coach and talk architect. He helps clients uncover the idea inside their story, sharpen their message, and deliver it with clarity, authority, and impact. He also serves as Head of Business Strategy for The Lawyers Roundtable and is the founder of MoBal Systems.

About TED

TED is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to discovering, debating and spreading ideas that spark conversation, deepen understanding and drive meaningful change. Our organization is devoted to curiosity, reason, wonder and the pursuit of knowledge, without an

agenda. We welcome people from every discipline and culture who seek a deeper understanding of the world and connection with others, and we invite everyone to engage with ideas and activate them in your community.

TED began in 1984 as a conference where Technology, Entertainment and Design converged, but today it spans a multitude of worldwide communities and initiatives exploring everything from science and business to education, arts and global issues. In addition to the TED Talks curated from our annual conferences and published on TED.com, we produce original podcasts, short video series, animated educational lessons (TED-Ed) and TV programs that are translated into more than 100 languages. Through The Audacious Project, TED has helped catalyze \$6.6 billion in funding for projects that support bold solutions to the world's most urgent challenges. Follow TED on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, and X.

About TEDx, x = independently organized event

In the spirit of ideas worth spreading, TEDx is a program of local, self-organized events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience. At a TEDx event, TED Talks video and live speakers combine to spark deep discussion and connection. These local, self-organized events are branded TEDx, where x = independently organized TED event. The TED Conference provides general guidance for the TEDx program, but individual TEDx events are self-organized.

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