



The Kitchen *Manual*

Everything you need to know to cook in our kitchen — from the first time you wash a sheet pan to the night you run service. The fire, the standards, the language, and how we take care of each other.

A NOTE BEFORE WE BEGIN

Welcome to the *line*.

This is the back-of-house companion to the Server Handbook. It's written for everyone in this kitchen — the dishwasher on their first night, the prep cook running the morning, the line cook standing the fire on a Saturday, the sous chef holding the pass. Read the chapters that apply to your role. Read the rest because you'll be there soon enough.

WHAT THIS BOOK IS

The kitchen, written down.

This manual exists because what makes a kitchen great is not the equipment or the menu or even the chef — it's the muscle memory of every person who works in it, doing the same things the same way every day until those things become invisible. The peeled garlic that's always in the same hotel pan. The walk-in that's always organized by date. The dishwasher who hands you a clean sauté pan before you have to ask.

None of that happens by accident. It happens because someone wrote it down, taught it, and held the standard. This book is the writing-down part. The teaching and the holding are still on us.

HOW TO READ IT

Twelve chapters. Read what's yours. Skim what isn't.

The first three chapters apply to everyone — the values of the kitchen, who Chef Sam is, and how the fire works. After that the manual goes role by role: dishwasher, prep, garde manger, the hot line, the pastry station, the sous chef. Then it covers the things that cut across every role: food safety, the language of the line, the cleaning protocols, and what happens when service goes sideways.

If you're a new dishwasher, read chapters one through four and twelve. Then come back for the others over your first month. If you're a new line cook, read all of it — you should know what the prep cook did before you got to your station.

THE ONE PROMISE WE ASK OF YOU

Show up clean and on time, do your job with care, and treat everyone in this kitchen with respect — from the chef to the dishwasher to the produce delivery driver. Everything else can be taught.

What this *kitchen* is.

Every kitchen has a temperament. Some run on fear. Some on ego. Some on autopilot. Ours runs on craft and respect. The values in this chapter are not nice ideas; they're the rules we hold each other to, every shift, with no exceptions.

WHAT WE COOK

Live fire, seasonal product, honest technique.

Old Friend is a charcoal-driven, seasonally-anchored restaurant in Wayne, Pennsylvania. The kitchen is built around a Josper CVJ-76 — a Spanish charcoal oven and Basque grill in one body — supported by a Rational iCombi Pro for precision cooking and a Montague HD range for sauces and sides. Chapter Three covers all of that in detail.

We are not a tasting-menu restaurant. We are not a steakhouse. We are not casual American. We are the place where a couple in Devon, looking for somewhere they can actually *eat* on a Tuesday, becomes regulars. The food is rooted in the Mid-Atlantic, sourced as close as we can credibly source it, and cooked over real charcoal because that's what gives food the smell and the depth nothing else can.

WHAT WE PROMISE

The plate that leaves this kitchen is the plate we'd send to our own table.

Every plate. Not the first one, not the easy one — every one. This means a couple of things, written here so we can all hold each other to them.

If you wouldn't eat it, you don't send it.

An under-rested steak, a chip in a plate, a sauce that broke, a garnish that wilted on the pass. The cook makes the call to remake or the runner sends it back. Either way, the plate doesn't go out. We waste food before we waste a guest's trust.

The fire tells the truth.

The Josper does not lie. Char isn't a decoration; it's a measurement of whether the cook knew when to pull the protein off. The cook who masters this kitchen masters that timing first. We talk about timing constantly because timing is everything.

Mise en place is religion.

"Mise en place" is French for "everything in its place." It is the entire job — for a prep cook in the morning, for a line cook before service, for a sous chef walking the kitchen at 4:45 PM. A station with bad mise is a station that will fail at 7:30. Always.

Cleanliness is not the end of service. It is during service.

The cook who cleans as they go finishes the night with energy left over. The cook who lets the station pile up finishes the night ruined. Wipe surfaces between plates. Reset cutting boards. Keep the line walkable for the chef and the runners.

HOW WE TREAT EACH OTHER

The rules that are not negotiable.

No yelling.

Calling a ticket loudly so the line hears it is not yelling. Berating a person — anyone in this kitchen — is. The chef doesn't do it. The sous chef doesn't do it. Line cooks don't do it to each other. We hold each other to high standards by being direct and unambiguous, not by being cruel.

No discrimination, harassment, or hazing.

Race, sex, gender, sexuality, religion, body, language, age. None of it gets used as a joke, a nickname, or a way to make someone feel small. There is no "kitchen humor" exception. The line is the same as it is anywhere — if you wouldn't say it in front of Chef Sam, don't say it.

The dishwasher is your colleague.

If you walk past the dish pit with empty hands, pick something up. If a dishwasher is in the weeds, ask what they need. If you are eating family meal, leave a clean spot for them. Their station is the bottleneck for every plate behind every table. Treat it that way.

Drugs and alcohol on the job: no.

Off shift, your time is your own. On shift, we are sharp, we are sober, we are paying attention. A line cook who is high is a danger to the rest of the kitchen. The restaurant industry has been hard on people for a hundred years; we don't add to that.

If something is wrong, say something.

You don't feel safe? Tell the sous chef or Chef Sam. You hurt yourself? Stop and say so. You think we should change how we're doing a thing? Say that too — at the pre-shift, in a private moment, however. Quiet kitchens don't get better.

*The food is downstream of how we treat each other.
Always.*

The *chef*.

You will spend more time with Chef Sam than with most people in your life right now. Know his story. It shaped this kitchen, and it tells you a lot about what to expect.

WHERE HE CAME FROM

A Delaware kid who found his station at the fire.

Chef Sam Henzy grew up in Delaware. He came to Old Friend from Fork in Old City, where he spent two years as executive chef. Before that, Middle Child. Before that, Vernick, Noma in Copenhagen, and Quince and Angler in San Francisco.

His live-fire work started at Noma, where he found a Jospier set up in a makeshift shack behind the restaurant and decided on the spot that it would be his station. He spent the last three months of a six-month internship on it. He went to Vernick partly for the wood oven. At Angler he was executive sous chef on a line with no conventional stoves at all. In his words, “it’s fires everywhere you look.”

At Old Friend he runs the kitchen: the team, the menu, and the food that comes off the hearth. The fire isn’t a gimmick. It’s how he cooks.

OUR CONSULTING CHEF

Chef Joe Monnich.

Joe grew up on the Main Line, trained at the Culinary Institute of America, and worked under Jean-Georges Vongerichten and Jean-Marie Lacroix before running Dandelion and Parc, two of the busiest kitchens in Philadelphia. He is the chef-owner of Stove & Co. He developed the Old Friend concept, assembled the operating team and brought Chef Sam to the project. Through the opening months he works the line alongside Sam and mentors the sous chef, then stays on as a consultant to the owners. While he’s on the line, learn everything you can from him.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

You’re working for a chef who cooks next to you.

Chef Sam is on the line, not in an office. When he asks you to fix something, it’s because he’s seen it done right and seen it done wrong, and he knows which one you’re showing him.

He will be direct with you. He will not yell. He will tell you when you've nailed something, and he will tell you when you haven't, in the same voice. If you can't tell from his tone whether the feedback is good or bad, ask. He'd rather you ask.

Ask: If you don't know how Chef Sam wants something done, ask. He'd rather you ask than guess.

HOW TO BE USEFUL TO HIM

Five things, in order.

1. Show up clean and on time, every shift.
2. Take feedback without defensiveness. He gives it because you can be better, not because he's mad.
3. Read tickets carefully. Most problems on the line start with someone half-reading.
4. Speak up when something is wrong — a delivery, a temp, a piece of equipment, your own injury. Quiet problems become loud problems.
5. Care about the food. The minute you stop caring, leave. The kitchen will know before you do.

The chef who hired you has stood in your shoes. Use that. Ask him things.

The *fire*, and the rest of the equipment.

The Josper is the heart of this kitchen. You'll learn to read it before you learn to cook on it. The combi, the range, the cold side — each has its own logic. This chapter is how the equipment thinks.

THE JOSPER

A Josper CVJ-76. Charcoal oven plus Basque grill in one body.

Our Josper is a CVJ-76 from Middleby — the "Combo" model that pairs a closed charcoal oven with an open Basque grill in a single stainless-steel unit. The closed oven side runs in the 500–700°F range. The open Basque grill side gives the cook direct heat with adjustable grate height — you can hover a piece of fish six inches above the embers, then drop it to three.

What makes a Josper different from a gas grill is the fuel. There's no gas in this oven. Real lump charcoal, lit fresh every day, burned down to embers by the time service starts. The smoke that walks across the dining room is from coals that were a tree last year.

How we light it

The Josper gets lit by the prep cook or sous chef in the early afternoon — generally around 1:30 PM — using a charcoal chimney. Once the chimney is glowing through, the coals go into the firebox at the back of the oven. The cook tends the fire down through the afternoon, banking it forward as the coals mature. By 5:00 PM the bed is steady embers, the oven is at temperature, and we're ready to cook.

FIRE SAFETY — NON-NEGOTIABLE

Closed-toed shoes whenever you are near the Josper. Tongs only — never bare hands inside the oven, ever, even when "cool." A charcoal oven holds heat for hours after the coals fade. The ash bin gets emptied into the metal ash container only, never a plastic bin or trash bag.

How it cooks

The closed oven gives a fast, deep sear. A 16-oz strip steak goes from raw to medium-rare in two and a half to three minutes, with a crust no gas grill can replicate. Whole fish in the closed oven gets a charred skin and stays moist inside. Vegetables on the Basque grill side get the leopard-spot char that becomes part of how the dish reads to a guest.

The biggest cooking skill on the Josper is reading the bed of coals. A bright orange bed is hot and pushes; a deeper, more ashy bed is steadier and forgiving. The line cook on

fire learns to spot the difference within their first month or they don't last on the station.

THE RATIONAL COMBI OVEN

An iCombi Pro 6-Half — precision for everything the fire can't do alone.

The Rational iCombi Pro 6-Half is our combi oven. Combi means it can run as a convection oven, a steam oven, or both at once — and it can hold an exact temperature anywhere from 90°F to about 575°F, with humidity control. It's a precision instrument.

The combi does the long, slow work the Jospers isn't suited for. The 48-hour short rib lives in the combi at low temperature until it's fall-apart. The slow-roasted king salmon. The duck confit. Most of our pastry. Anything where we want a known, repeatable outcome rather than a hand-controlled one.

Many of our dishes use both: combi first, then Jospers to finish. The short rib gets its 48-hour combi braise and then a sharp Jospers sear before plating. The result is tender meat with charred exterior — only possible because we have both pieces of equipment.

THE HD RANGE

A 36-inch Montague Legend with two hot tops and a cheesemelter.

Our range is a Montague Legend 136-9A — 36 inches wide, with two 18-inch hot tops, a standard convection oven base, and a cheesemelter overhead. 110,000 BTU of natural gas. The hot tops are not burners with grates — they are solid steel plates heated from below. Hotter at the center, cooler at the edges, which lets the cook hold a sauce on the cool ring while searing on the hot ring of the same plate.

The range is where sauces, reductions, side starches, and most of the "in-between" cooking happens. The cheesemelter overhead handles gratins and crusted finishes.

A commercial deep fryer at the end of the hot line.

Our fryer is a commercial gas-fired deep fryer with a roughly 50-lb oil capacity, sitting at the end of the hot line near the sauté station. It runs at 350°F for general service and gets pushed to 375°F for finishing crispy items. The oil is canola unless otherwise specified — a high smoke point and a neutral flavor so the food tastes like itself, not like the fryer.

What the fryer does for us: the frites that accompany the côte de boeuf for two and a few other dishes. The twice-cooked pig ear. The duck confit croquettes — fried to order at the moment of service. Occasional specials. We are not a fried-food restaurant, but when something needs that crackling texture, the fryer is the only way to get there honestly.

Twice-cooked technique

Several of our items run two stages: a low-temperature blanch around 275°F to cook the inside through, then a hold (refrigerated, often overnight), then a finish at 375°F for color and crisp. The frites work this way. The pig ear works this way. The cook learns to manage both temperatures in the same vessel through the night — typically running hotter as service progresses since most twice-cooked items go to the high-finish stage during peak hours.

FRYER SAFETY — NON-NEGOTIABLE

Water and hot oil do not mix. Ever. No wet hands, no wet baskets, no ice anywhere near the fryer. A single drop of water in 350°F oil flashes to steam and throws hot oil across the line. Wet product gets patted dry before it goes in. Baskets dry between uses.

Oil fires are smothered, never doused. If a fryer fire starts: kill the gas, slide the lid or a sheet tray over the top, and call the sous chef. The Class K fire extinguisher above the line is for fryer fires only. Water and standard extinguishers make oil fires worse.

Daily protocol

- **Filter the oil daily.** End-of-shift filter cycle — the machine has a built-in filter pump; the prep cook or sous chef runs it during close.

- **Skim during service.** A fine-mesh skimmer lives at the station. Pull crumbs and floaters between drops; they burn fast and darken the oil.
- **Check oil quality.** If oil looks dark, smells off, or smokes early, change it. We err on the side of fresher. Old oil makes good food taste tired.
- **Don't overload the basket.** Too much product drops the oil temperature, makes food greasy instead of crisp, and slows service.
- **Salt immediately on landing.** Frites get salt the moment they hit the pan from the basket, while the surface oil is still on them. Salt later, it doesn't stick.

THE CODES ON THE MENU

Every dish has a station letter.

Every dish on the working menu is tagged with a single letter that tells you where it's cooked. This is how the expeditor calls tickets and how a new line cook learns the dish:

- **J** — Jospier charcoal oven or Basque grill
- **C** — Rational combi oven
- **R** — HD range and hot tops
- **X** — Cold prep, no heat

About two-thirds of the active menu is J. That's by design — this is a fire-driven restaurant.

THE SMALLER EQUIPMENT

The things you'll use every shift.

- **Vitamix and Robot Coupe** — purées and sauces. Run them empty for ten seconds at the end of every shift to clear the seal area.
- **Vacuum sealer** — sous vide bags for combi work. Bags are not reused.
- **Slicer** — only operated by trained staff. Lockout before cleaning.
- **Mixer (Hobart 20-qt)** — pastry and dough. Wire whisk for emulsions, paddle for everything else.

WHY ALL THIS MATTERS

You cannot cook well on equipment you don't understand. The line cook who can adjust the Jospier coal bed in the middle of a rush is the line cook who never falls

behind. Spend time with the equipment. Ask Chef Sam or the sous chef to walk you through anything you're not sure about. There is no penalty for asking, only for guessing.

The *dishwasher*.

The hardest job in the kitchen, and the one that keeps every other job possible. If this chapter applies to you, read it twice. If it doesn't, read it once — because the day a dishwasher quits without warning is the day everyone in this kitchen finds themselves in this chapter.

THE ROLE

The kitchen flows through your station.

Every plate, every sauté pan, every hotel pan, every set of tongs, every cutting board, every wine glass that comes back from the floor — passes through your station and returns to ours, clean. The line cannot cook ahead of dish. The floor cannot serve ahead of glassware. When your station is fast, the kitchen is fast. When your station falls behind, every other station starts to slow.

This is not a stepping-stone job. It is a job that the entire restaurant depends on, and we hire, pay, and treat it accordingly. Many great cooks started here. So did plenty of great chefs. So might you, if you want to. But the only goal we expect of you tonight is to do this job well.

THE STATION SETUP

What you're working with.

- **Three-bay sink** — wash, rinse, sanitize. Each bay has its own purpose; never combine.
- **High-temp dish machine** — final wash for plates, flatware, glassware. Temp gauge must read 180°F final rinse.
- **Pre-rinse spray** — knocks food off before the machine. Use it.
- **Pot sink / hand wash** — for the heavy items the machine can't take.
- **Drying racks** — air-dry only. No towel drying of plates and glasses.
- **Trash, recycling, compost** — three separate streams. Know what goes where.

THE SHIFT

Hour by hour, what you do.

- 3:00 PM** — Clock in. Apron. Slip-resistant shoes. Empty floor mats and re-set.
- 3:15 PM** — Fill sanitizer buckets. Test sanitizer with strip — must read 200 ppm chlorine or 200 ppm quat per the bucket.
- 3:30 PM** — Verify machine: detergent dispensing, rinse dispensing, gauge at temp (160°F wash, 180°F rinse).
- 3:45 PM** — Run a pre-service cycle with empty rack to confirm the machine is hot and clean.

- 4:00 PM Take any backed-up dishes from prep. Reset the pass and walk-in for service.
- 4:30 PM Family meal. Eat. Sit down. The line will hand you everything in twenty minutes — eat now while you can.
- 5:00 PM Service. Process incoming as fast as it lands. Empty racks back to stations the moment they're done.
- 7:30 PM Peak. Stay calm. The wave will pass.
- 9:30 PM Begin pulling deep cleaning items from the line as cooks finish stations.
- 10:00 PM Close. Machine drained, descaled, wiped down. Floor mopped. Trash and recycling out. Sanitizer dumped.

SANITATION

The numbers that keep us legal.

ITEM	SPEC	WHY IT MATTERS
Dish machine final rinse	180°F minimum	The temperature that sanitizes plates without chemicals.
Dish machine wash tank	160°F minimum	Hot enough to lift fat and food off surfaces.
Sanitizer bucket — chlorine	50–200 ppm	The wipe bucket on every station. Tested at start and every two hours.
Sanitizer bucket — quat	200–400 ppm	If the buckets are quat-based instead of chlorine.
Hand wash sink	100°F minimum	Hands washed for 20 seconds with soap, every time entering the kitchen.

IF THE MACHINE ISN'T RUNNING RIGHT

If the temp gauge reads low, the sanitizer isn't dispensing, or anything seems off — stop, tell the sous chef, switch to three-bay sink wash with manual sanitizer in the meantime. We do not run dishes through a machine that isn't doing its job. The health inspector and the guest will both find out.

The things that separate a good dishwasher from a great one.

- **Sort as you go.** Sheet pans in one stack, sauté pans in another, hotel pans in another. Sorted incoming is twice as fast to wash.
- **Pre-rinse aggressively.** The spray hose is your friend. Knock everything off before the machine.
- **Return clean items to stations, not to drying racks.** If the sauté pan was washed for the meat station, walk it back to meat. The cook will love you for it.
- **Empty trash before it overflows.** Not at the second it overflows. A few minutes early.
- **Glassware face up, then face down.** Glasses go upside down in racks for the machine, then upright on the drying rack so they cool dry.
- **Speak up when you're underwater.** Tell the sous chef. We will send someone to help.

Plates are not the job. The kitchen is the job. Plates are how you do it.

The *prep* cook.

Service is the visible part of a kitchen. Prep is the invisible part that makes service possible. A line cook arrives at four o'clock and finds the day's work already done: stocks made, vegetables broken down, proteins portioned, sauces base-built. That's you.

THE ROLE

You set the day before the day starts.

Prep cooks at Old Friend work mornings into early afternoons. You receive deliveries, break down product, run the sous's prep list, taste your work as you go, label everything you make, and leave the kitchen ready for the line. The line cook who walks in at 3:30 PM should find your work — clean, labeled, in its place, in the right amount — without having to ask.

THE SHIFT

What a typical morning looks like.

8:00 AM Clock in. Walk-in check: temps, anything past date, what's running low.

8:15 AM Prep list from the sous chef. Sequenced by priority — stocks first, anything that needs time, then everything else.

8:30 AM Stocks on, if making fresh. Chicken stock simmers six hours; veal demi takes longer.

9:00 AM Deliveries arrive. Receive, check, label, walk in.

10:00 AM Break down proteins. Portion. Vacuum-seal anything for combi.

11:00 AM Vegetable prep — peeled, cut, sized for service.

1:00 PM Sauces and base components — vinaigrettes, compound butters, pickles, gremolatas.

1:30 PM Light the Jospier. (The sous chef may take this; if it's you, see Chapter Three.)

2:30 PM Wrap, label, walk in everything. Hand-off list to the sous chef.

3:00 PM Out, or stay to bridge into service. The sous will tell you which.

RECEIVING DELIVERIES

The first quality check of the day.

When the produce, fish, or meat arrives, you are the first person in the chain to see it. We have standards with every supplier, and the receiving moment is when those standards get enforced.

- **Check the invoice.** Did we get what we ordered? Right quantities, right sizes, right cuts?

- **Weigh proteins.** A 12-lb tenderloin should weigh close to 12 lb. If it doesn't, note it on the invoice and tell the sous chef.
- **Check temperatures.** Cold items at 41°F or below, frozen at 0°F or below. If the truck delivered above spec, reject it.
- **Inspect quality.** Bruised herbs, soft tomatoes, fish with cloudy eyes, beef with off color. Reject anything that isn't right.
- **Sign only after checking.** Never sign first and inspect after. The supplier knows the difference.

IF SOMETHING IS WRONG

Off-temp, wrong product, damaged packaging — reject it and call the sous chef. Do not put it in the walk-in "for now." Once it goes in, it's accepted. The supplier will replace anything we reject quickly; that's the agreement.

KNIFE WORK

The cuts you'll use every day.

Prep cooks live with their knives. Sharpened every shift, washed by hand, dried, returned to their roll or magnet. The cuts you'll run constantly:

CUT	DIMENSION	WHAT IT'S FOR
<i>Brunoise</i>	1/8" cube	Mirepoix for stocks, garnish for sauces and consommés.
<i>Small dice</i>	1/4" cube	Vegetable mains, salsas, ratatouille-style preparations.
<i>Medium dice</i>	1/2" cube	Roasted root vegetables, hearty stews.
<i>Julienne</i>	1/8" × 2"	Garnishes, slaws, certain salads.
<i>Chiffonade</i>	thin ribbons	Herbs (basil, mint), tender greens.
<i>Tournée</i>	7-sided football	Classical French technique. Rare for us, but Chef will ask.

Sharpening: *Steel your knife at the start and middle of your shift, sharpen on the stone weekly. A dull knife is more dangerous than a sharp one — it slips. The kitchen has stones; ask the sous chef to show you the angle if you don't know it.*

LABELING

Every container, every batch, every time.

Every container that goes into a walk-in or speed rack gets labeled. We use date-marking labels with a green dot system: green dot for ready-to-go, red dot for needs more time, no dot is not allowed.

Each label has four pieces of information:

- **What it is** — "chicken stock," "blanched broccoli rabe," "shallot confit."
- **Date made** — today's date, your initials.
- **Discard date** — most preparations are 3 days; some are 5; pickles and ferments longer. The sous chef will tell you.
- **Batch size or yield** — "2 qt," "12 portions," "1 sheet pan."

A walk-in full of unlabeled containers is a walk-in we will throw out. Labels are non-negotiable.

FIFO AND ROTATION

First in, first out. Every shelf, every time.

When you pull a container down to use it, check the dates on the shelf and pull the oldest first. When you put new product on a shelf, it goes behind the older product, not in front of it. This is FIFO — first in, first out — and it is how we waste less and serve fresher.

The walk-in has zones — proteins on the bottom shelves (drips can't fall on anything below), produce in the middle, dairy and ready-to-eat on top. Sanitation logic.

The line cook who can't find their mise didn't have a bad shift. The prep cook had a bad morning.

Cold side: *garde manger*.

Crudo, tartare, charcuterie, salads, the bread service. The cold station is faster than the hot line and just as exacting. The plating standard for an oyster is the same as for a ribeye — different ingredient, same care.

THE STATION

The coldest, cleanest part of the kitchen.

Garde manger lives in the cold prep zone — separate from the hot line, with its own undercounter refrigeration, its own cutting boards, its own knives. Cold station knives never go to the hot side and vice versa. This is partly about cross-contamination (raw fish, fish handling, oysters) and partly about discipline — the cook who works clean works fast.

WHAT YOU COOK

Cold doesn't mean simple.

- **Crudo** — raw fish, sliced to specific thickness, dressed at the moment of service. Olive oil, citrus, salt, sometimes a chili oil or herb. The fish quality is everything. Sliced too thick, it eats heavy. Too thin, it disappears.
- **Steak tartare** — hand-cut, never machine-ground. Knife-cut into small dice, dressed with shallot, capers, Dijon, egg yolk, parsley. Mixed at the table or in service, never held.
- **Charcuterie boards** — sliced to order. Three meats, one or two cheeses, mustard, cornichon, grilled bread.
- **Salads** — the market salad changes daily based on what came in. The ember-roasted squash salad. Composed plates that look careless and aren't.
- **Bread service** — Jospier-blistered sourdough with cultured Keswick butter and fleur de sel. The first thing many guests put in their mouth here. Treat it that way.

THE PROTOCOLS

The rules that make this station safe.

- **Gloves on for raw fish.** Changed between species, changed after touching anything else.
- **Color-coded cutting boards.** Blue for fish, yellow for poultry, green for produce, red for raw meat. Never cross.
- **Internal temps logged.** The undercounter holds at 38°F or below. Check at start and middle of shift.
- **Oysters opened to order.** Never pre-shucked, never held on ice for more than the minute between opening and plating.

- **Raw protein audit at every drop.** If fish smells, look at it. If it looks dull, smell it. If either fails, pull it.

PLATING

The cold plate is a still life.

A hot plate hides its sins under heat and steam. A cold plate doesn't. Every component is visible, every line is read. Plate cold plates the way you'd photograph them — composed, considered, with intentional negative space. The chef will give you references; learn them by heart, then learn to extend them to whatever comes up.

A NOTE ON SPEED

Cold station is often the first ticket to drop in a course. Speed matters — but cold plates also wait for hot if the course is being fired together. Coordinate with the expediter. If the table is on a single course of cold, fire when called. If they have crudo and a hot starter together, the cold needs to land within fifteen seconds of the hot.

The *hot line*.

The Josper, the range, the combi. This is where the noise lives and where most of the menu is finished. Standing this station well is the difference between a calm service and chaos. Cook smart, talk loud, clean as you go.

THE STATIONS

How the line is laid out.

The hot line at Old Friend has three primary stations, with the Josper anchoring the room:

STATION ONE

Fire (Josper)

The biggest workload on the busiest nights. Steaks, whole fish, chicken, lamb, the vegetable mains. Tongs only. Reads the bed of coals constantly. Calls "fire" loud and clear when starting a protein. The most senior line cook on the schedule usually owns this station, often the sous chef.

STATION TWO

Sauté / Range

Sauces, sides, reductions, anything that lives on the hot tops. Mounting butters happen at the last second. Brunoise mirepoix used constantly — make sure prep left enough. The fryer sits at the end of this station; the same cook usually runs both, dropping frites and twice-cooked items between sauté work.

STATION THREE

Combi / Finish

Anything pulled from the combi to plate. The 48-hour short rib, the slow-roasted salmon, the duck confit. Often the cook holding this station also runs the cheesemelter for finishes and gratins. Plating coordinator on busy nights.

READING A TICKET

The expediter's call is law.

Tickets come in via the printer at the pass. The expediter (Chef Sam or the sous chef) reads them, calls them, and decides when each course fires. The line cook's job is to hear, repeat, and execute.

A standard call sounds like this:

- **Drop** — start a dish. "Drop two Jospers strips, medium rare."
- **Pickup** — bring a dish to ready. "Pickup table 14 — two strips, one cauliflower, one branzino."
- **Fire** — start cooking now. Often for proteins where timing matters: "Fire short rib for 12, two minutes."
- **Hold** — keep ready but don't plate. "Hold 8, vivre [the table is talking]."
- **Push** — get this out now. "Push the strips, runner waiting."
- **86** — we're out. "86 halibut."

The cook's response to every call is "yes" or "heard." Not "okay," not "got it," not silence. Yes. Heard. Loud enough that the expediter knows you have it.

TIMING

The clock you keep in your head.

Every protein has a timing window from "drop" to "ready." A 16-oz Jospers strip is about three minutes plus a three-minute rest — six minutes from drop to plate. A whole branzino is about eight minutes. The 48-hour short rib needs ninety seconds back on the Jospers to crust. The whole roasted cauliflower takes about twelve minutes.

The line cook tracks each protein's window in their head, against every other thing they have in the fire or on the range. The expediter trusts you to know.

DISH FAMILY	DROP TO READY	NOTES
<i>Jospers steaks (NY strip, ribeye)</i>	~6 min	3 min fire + 3 min rest. Push on close to ready.
<i>Côte de boeuf (32 oz)</i>	~22 min	14 min fire + 8 min rest. Fire 18 min before pickup call.

DISH FAMILY	DROP TO READY	NOTES
<i>Whole fish (branzino, sea bass)</i>	~8 min	Cooks fast — watch the eye and the skin.
<i>Josper whole chicken</i>	~28 min	Spatchcocked. Long fire — needs to start early.
<i>Lamb chops al carbon</i>	~5 min	Heat-set marinade burns fast on hot bed. Manage carefully.
<i>Whole roasted cauliflower</i>	~12 min	Combi-blanching in advance, finished on Josper.
<i>48-hour short rib</i>	~3 min (finish)	Already cooked; just crust and sauce.
<i>Slow-roasted salmon</i>	~5 min (finish)	Pulled at temp from combi, finished briefly.

PLATING

The pass is the standard.

Every plate goes across the pass. The expeditor or sous chef checks every single one before it leaves. If a plate is wrong, it goes back — sometimes for a wipe, sometimes for a full remake. The cook does not argue. The cook fixes.

Plate the same way every time:

1. Plate is clean and warm (for hot dishes) or chilled (for cold).
2. Protein goes first, in the position the chef has shown you.
3. Sauce next — applied, never poured.
4. Sides composed around or beside, never on top of the protein.
5. Garnish last, applied with intent. If it's a single herb leaf, it has a spot.
6. Rim wiped. Always. With a damp side towel, not your fingers.

How we handle them.

You will burn yourself. You will cut yourself. Most of the time it's a quick "ouch" and back to work. Sometimes it's more.

- **Minor burn** — cold water immediately. Burn cream from the first aid kit. Cover with a finger cot if you're back on the line.
- **Minor cut** — wash hands, pressure to stop bleeding, blue food-grade bandage (never tan), nitrile glove over the bandage. Back to work if comfortable.
- **Anything that bleeds through a bandage** — stop. Tell the sous chef. We will not stitch you in the walk-in.
- **Anything that limits your hand** — same. We'd rather lose your shift than your hand.

HONEST REPORTING

If you hurt yourself, say so out loud. The kitchen will work around you. Hiding an injury makes everything worse — for you, and for the food you're handling. We file an incident report for any injury that needs first aid; that's how we protect you with workers' comp if it later turns out to be more serious than it looked.

The *pastry* station.

Six desserts done perfectly is the program — not twelve done acceptably. The pastry station is small, precise, and rotates with the seasons. Ember s'mores. Affogato. Stone fruit and ice cream. Char and chocolate.

THE ROLE

Precision and patience.

Pastry at Old Friend lives between savory and sweet — the ember s'mores, the affogato, the stone fruit on the Josper. It's not a strict French pastry program; it's dessert that fits the rest of what we cook. The cook who runs pastry needs to be precise in measurement and patient with timing — pastry is the part of the kitchen most punished by impatience.

THE SHIFT

Morning prep, evening finish.

Pastry mise starts in the morning alongside savory prep. The pastry cook makes:

- **Doughs** — for the ember s'mores graham, any tart shells, any cookies.
- **Ice cream and sorbet** — base built and spun on the morning, held in the freezer.
- **Caramels, jams, compotes, brittles** — anything that holds for days.
- **Plated components** — par-bake any tart shells, portion any chocolate, slice cakes.

Evening, the pastry cook fires desserts off the line, often plating directly at the pass between hot courses.

MEASUREMENT

Weights, not volumes.

Pastry uses weight measurement (grams) for almost everything, because volume is unreliable for solids and pastry is a chemistry problem. A scale is on the station at all times. Recipes are written in grams. The cook learns to scale up and down by ratio.

Bakers' percentages: *Most of our doughs are written in bakers' percentages — every ingredient as a percentage of the flour weight. Learn to read them; the sous chef or Chef Sam will walk through it once.*

What lives in the cold case, what gets plated to order.

- Bases and components are held in the pastry walk-in or freezer, dated and labeled.
- Plating is done to order — desserts get assembled in the moment, not pre-plated.
- Ice cream is scooped at the second, never pre-scooped onto a tray.
- The affogato espresso pours fresh on the ice cream. The runner walks it in under 30 seconds.
- The ember s'mores is finished on the Jospier or with a torch tableside, depending on the night.

The *sous* chef.

Chef Sam's right hand. The voice of the kitchen when he's not on the line. The person who walks the pass at 4:45 PM and decides whether we're ready. If this chapter is yours, the rest of the manual is your textbook and your tool. The cooks below you are reading it because of you.

THE ROLE

You run the kitchen so the chef can lead it.

The sous chef is Chef Sam's deputy. You make the prep list, manage the schedule, handle most receiving, run pre-shift, hold the pass during service when the chef is plating, and walk the close at the end of the night. You are also a teacher. New cooks watch how you handle yourself more than they listen to what you say.

You are not a junior chef. You are the person Chef Sam trusts to make decisions when he's not there. He will not micromanage you. He will give you a target and expect you to hit it. When you don't, he'll tell you. When you do, he won't always — but he'll notice.

THE DAILY ARC

What you own, hour by hour.

7:30 AM In before the prep cook. Walk-in audit. Identify what we're light on for the night.

8:00 AM Write the prep list. Hand it to the prep cook with priority order.

9:00 AM Receiving — lead, or back up the prep cook. The quality decisions belong to you.

10:00 AM Menu finalization for the night. Confirm with Chef Sam. Print or write up changes.

12:00 PM Family meal planned and started.

1:30 PM Light the Josper. Tend the fire through the afternoon.

3:00 PM Line cooks arrive. Walk each station with each cook. Hand over mise.

4:30 PM Family meal served. Eat with the team.

5:00 PM Pre-shift with floor and kitchen, joint with the GM. Walk through tonight.

5:15 PM Service. Hold the pass alongside the chef, or solo when he steps off.

10:30 PM Walk the close. Sign off on every station. Tomorrow's first prep list begins to take shape in your head.

HOLDING THE PASS

What you do when you're calling tickets.

The expediter is the gatekeeper of every plate. The role demands three things at once:

1. **Reading every ticket fully** before calling it — guest count, allergies, modifications, table position, order of courses.

2. **Calling timing** — when to fire each course, when to push, when to hold. The line cooks trust your call.
3. **Inspecting every plate** — temperature, plating, sauce, garnish, rim. A plate that is not right does not leave the pass.

The pass should be loud enough to be heard but never angry. "Heard, heard, heard" comes back to you from the line. If the line gets quiet, get louder yourself — silence on a busy night is a sign cooks are drowning.

WHEN THE CHEF IS ON THE LINE

Chef Sam will sometimes step from the pass to the line — to plate a complex dish, to handle a fire, to teach. The moment he steps off, you have the pass. The moment he steps back, hand it back. There is no negotiation; the line needs one voice at a time.

MANAGING PEOPLE

The cooks below you are watching how you handle yourself.

- **Direct feedback at the moment.** Don't save it up for the end of the night. If a plate goes back, tell the cook why before they make the next one wrong the same way.
- **Public praise, private correction.** Compliment a cook in front of the team. Correct in a quiet word.
- **Teach the why.** "Hold the sauce on the cooler ring because the protein will pull energy from the pan" is twice as useful as "move the sauce."
- **Protect the team upward.** If a vendor delivered bad product or a server made a bad call, that's a kitchen-and-management conversation. Don't air it in front of the line.
- **Have favorites privately, not visibly.** Every cook gets the same standard, the same temperature, the same access to your time.

The most important fifteen minutes of your day.

At close, you walk every station with the cook who ran it. You check that everything is wrapped, labeled, dated, returned to the walk-in. You check that surfaces are scrubbed, equipment broken down, the floor mopped, the trash out, the line ready to be walked into tomorrow morning. You sign off in the closing log book.

This is the moment that decides whether tomorrow's prep cook arrives to a clean kitchen or a problem. Never short the close.

What he expects.

- **He wants to hear about problems before they're big.** Tell him early.
- **He wants you to make calls when he's not there.** Don't wait for permission on things you can decide.
- **He doesn't want a yes-man.** If you think a dish isn't right, say so. He'll listen.
- **He wants you to grow.** He started where you are. He knows what the next chapter looks like.

A great kitchen is a chef and a sous who finish each other's sentences without ever needing to.

Food safety, in plain *English*.

Every cook in this kitchen will eventually get a ServSafe Manager certification, and most of you will get the Food Handler card before that. This chapter is the working version — the things you do every shift to keep guests safe, regardless of paper certifications.

THE TEMPERATURES THAT MATTER

Memorize these. They are the line between safe and not safe.

WHAT	TEMPERATURE	WHY
<i>Cold holding</i>	$\leq 41^{\circ}\text{F}$	Walk-ins, undercounters, cold prep surfaces.
<i>Frozen holding</i>	$\leq 0^{\circ}\text{F}$	Reach-in freezer, walk-in freezer.
<i>Hot holding</i>	$\geq 135^{\circ}\text{F}$	Any cooked food being held for service.
<i>Cook poultry to</i>	165°F (15 sec)	Chicken, duck, turkey, game birds.
<i>Cook ground meats to</i>	155°F (15 sec)	Burgers, sausage, ground lamb.
<i>Cook whole-muscle pork to</i>	145°F (15 sec)	Pork chops, pork loin, pork shoulder.
<i>Cook fish to</i>	145°F (15 sec)	Except where served raw with proper sourcing.
<i>Cook beef steaks to</i>	145°F (15 sec) for med-rare	Service temps lower with guest preference.
<i>Reheat any cooked food to</i>	165°F (15 sec)	Anything being heated back up for service.
<i>Cooling — first stage</i>	$135^{\circ}\text{F} \rightarrow 70^{\circ}\text{F}$ in 2 hr	Hot stocks, large braises.
<i>Cooling — second stage</i>	$70^{\circ}\text{F} \rightarrow 41^{\circ}\text{F}$ in 4 hr	From the first stage to walk-in safe.

THE DANGER ZONE

41°F to 135°F. Don't live there.

Bacteria grow fastest between 41°F and 135°F. Food spending more than four cumulative hours in that range — without cooking to kill what's grown — is not safe. The four-hour clock includes preparation, service, and any cool-down time. This is why we move quickly with proteins and why we never leave a hot stock to "rest on the counter."

CROSS-CONTAMINATION

The thing that gets restaurants closed.

Raw fish on a board that just held cooked salmon. A glove that touched raw chicken touching a finished plate. A cloth that wiped raw meat juice then wiped a plate rim. These are how guests get sick.

- **Color-coded cutting boards.** Blue fish, yellow poultry, green produce, red raw meat. White for cooked. Never mix.
- **Glove changes.** Between raw and ready-to-eat. Between fish species. After touching face, hair, garbage, or your phone.
- **Sanitizer wipes.** Boards and surfaces wiped with sanitizer between tasks. The wipe is short; the discipline is long.
- **Plate handling.** Never touch the rim or the food surface of a finished plate.

ALLERGIES

The most serious thing on every ticket.

Allergies are flagged on tickets in red caps. When you see one, the protocol is:

1. Call it out loud — "ALLERGY, table 7, NUTS."
2. Stop the station. Sanitize the cutting board, the knife, the work surface. Fresh gloves.
3. Cook with a dedicated pan and set of utensils that haven't touched the allergen.
4. The plate goes out hand-carried by the cook to the expeditor, not on the regular pass with other plates.
5. Chef Sam or the sous chef confirms the plate before it goes to the floor.

IF YOU'RE NOT SURE

Anaphylaxis is not a place we improvise. If a guest asks a question through the server and the cook isn't 100% sure, the answer is "let me check with the chef." Always. The two seconds it takes to ask Chef Sam is the difference between a great service and an ambulance.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

The things you do before you touch food.

- **Hand wash** — 20 seconds, soap and hot water, every time you enter the kitchen, between raw and ready-to-eat tasks, after using the restroom, after eating, after sneezing or coughing.
- **Hair** — pulled back. Hats or hairnets per station.
- **Sickness** — if you are vomiting, diarrhea, or running a fever, you cannot work. Call the sous chef. We will cover.
- **Cuts** — covered with a blue (food-grade visible) bandage under a nitrile glove.
- **Jewelry** — wedding rings and one stud earring per ear allowed. Otherwise, off.
- **Nails** — short, clean, no polish.

THE WALK-IN AUDIT

What we look for, every day.

The walk-in is the kitchen's standing inventory. The sous chef walks it every morning, the prep cook walks it again at the start of their shift, the line cook walks it during pre-service. Three audits a day. We look for:

- Anything past its date.
- Anything unlabeled.
- Anything that smells or looks off.
- Anything stored above raw protein (which would be wrong — raw protein lowest).
- Anything that should be vacuum-sealed or covered but isn't.
- Anything where we are running light for service.

*Food safety is not the bureaucratic part of the job. It is
the job.*

The *language* of the line.

Every kitchen has its own dialect. Some of it is French, some is military, some came from the cook who taught the cook who taught Chef Sam. Learn the vocabulary fast — it's how a busy line communicates without anyone having to explain themselves.

SERVICE CALLS

The shorthand of a moving kitchen.

WORD	MEANING
<i>Fire</i>	Start cooking now.
<i>Drop</i>	Place a protein into its cooking method.
<i>Pickup</i>	Bring it to ready, time to plate.
<i>Push</i>	Move it out faster.
<i>Hold</i>	Don't plate yet — table isn't ready.
<i>86</i>	We're out. Don't sell it anymore.
<i>All day</i>	The running total for the night. "Three strips all day" = three so far tonight.
<i>SOS</i>	Sauce on the side.
<i>VIP</i>	Important guest, give it extra care.
<i>Hot behind</i>	I'm coming up behind you with something hot. Don't turn around.
<i>Sharp behind</i>	Same, but with a knife.
<i>Corner</i>	I'm rounding a corner with food, watch your step.
<i>Heard</i>	Acknowledged. The standard response to any call.
<i>Walking</i>	Plate is on its way to the runner / floor.
<i>Refire</i>	Cook it again — first one was wrong or sent back.
<i>On the fly</i>	Cook it as fast as humanly possible — table is waiting.
<i>Dead plate</i>	The plate from a sent-back dish. Becomes staff snack or trash.
<i>Walked / Walk-out</i>	A guest who left without eating.

The French and the English, used interchangeably.

TERM	MEANING
<i>Mise en place</i>	"Everything in its place" — your station's pre-service setup.
<i>Brunoise / small dice / medium dice</i>	Cuts of decreasing fineness — see Chapter Five.
<i>Chiffonade</i>	Thin ribbons, usually herbs or tender greens.
<i>Monter au beurre</i>	To finish a sauce by whisking in cold butter off heat.
<i>Deglaze</i>	To lift the fond from a pan with wine, stock, or vinegar.
<i>Reduce</i>	To cook a liquid down to concentrate flavor.
<i>Sweat</i>	To cook vegetables in fat without color, low heat.
<i>Sear</i>	To brown the exterior of a protein at high heat.
<i>Rest</i>	The time a protein sits after cooking — for steaks, often as long as the cook time.
<i>Carryover</i>	The continued cooking from residual heat after a protein is pulled.
<i>Confit</i>	To cook slowly in fat at low temperature — most often duck or garlic.
<i>Sous vide</i>	"Under vacuum" — cooked in a sealed bag at precise temperature, here in the combi.
<i>À la minute</i>	"At the minute" — cooked to order, not held.
<i>Marry</i>	To combine ingredients and let flavors meld.
<i>Mother sauce</i>	One of the classical French sauce families — béchamel, velouté, espagnole, tomato, hollandaise.

Loud, clear, repeated back.

The line gets noisy. Equipment hums, the dish machine cycles, the expeditor calls, the runner moves, the chef finishes a plate. The way to be heard in that noise is to speak loudly, clearly, in short sentences, with eye contact when possible.

Everything gets repeated. "Two strips medium rare, one branzino, table 14." "Heard, two strips medium rare, one branzino, table 14." The repeat is the contract — both sides know the order is in the system.

One special case: when something is hot or sharp behind you and you can't see them, the standard call is always heard back. "Hot behind." "Heard." Always.

The *operations*.

The everyday stuff — clocking in, getting paid, calling out, getting hurt, getting better. The chapter you only need once a quarter, but the one that has to be in the book.

HOURS & SCHEDULING

Tuesday through Sunday, dinner only.

Old Friend is closed Mondays. Service runs Tuesday through Sunday, dinner starting at 5 PM. Kitchen hours vary by role:

- **Prep cooks** — typically 8 AM to 3 PM, with overlap for handoff.
- **Line cooks** — typically 3 PM to 11 PM Tuesday through Thursday, 3 PM to 11:30 PM Friday and Saturday, 3 PM to 11 PM Sunday.
- **Dishwashers** — 3 PM to 11 PM most nights, with one daytime shift covering Saturday prep load.
- **Sous chef** — 7:30 AM to 11 PM most days, with one full day off per week.

The schedule comes out Wednesday for the next week. Ask the sous chef for time off two weeks ahead. To trade a shift, offer it in My Schedule; the Chef or sous chef approves it. Trades close at 3 PM the day before (3 PM Sunday for Tuesday shifts).

UNIFORM

Clean, fitted, professional.

- **Chef coat or kitchen tee** — clean every shift. Coats are provided and laundered through a service.
- **Apron** — provided by Old Friend. Kept clean. Backup in the office.
- **Pants** — black or dark check. Comfortable, breathable.
- **Shoes** — slip-resistant, closed-toe, no canvas. Comfort matters; you'll stand ten hours.
- **Hat or hair restraint** — required. Bandanas, skullcaps, baseball caps all fine.
- **Personal:** No strong cologne. Tattoos and piercings fine. Nails short and clean.

PAY & TIPS

Hourly, plus a back-of-house tip share.

Kitchen positions are paid hourly at competitive rates — typically at or above Main Line market. The front of house operates a pooled tip system, with a structured BOH tip share that goes to the line, prep, and dish positions. Pay runs bi-weekly direct

deposit. Stubs in your email. Discrepancies go to the GM or the sous chef the next day; we'll fix them in the next pay cycle.

FAMILY MEAL

4:30 PM, every day.

The kitchen feeds itself before it feeds the dining room. Family meal is real food, cooked with the same care as anything we send out, often a dish Chef Sam wants to test on the team. Sit down. Eat. Talk to each other. The cooks and the dishwashers and the servers eat the same meal, often at the same time. Don't skip it.

CALLING OUT

How to do it right.

- Call the sous chef at least three hours before your shift if you can. Text is fine if you can't reach by phone, but call is preferred.
- Don't lie. If you're sick, say so. If you can't get childcare, say so. The kitchen handles real reasons better than fake ones.
- If you find your own cover, offer the shift in My Schedule; the sous chef approves.
- Repeated unexplained absences are a problem; the sous will talk to you. We'd rather have the conversation than lose you.

INJURIES & SICKNESS

Tell us, every time.

If you get hurt on the job, tell the sous chef immediately. We file an incident report — for your protection. Workers' comp covers kitchen injuries, but only if the report is filed at the time. Hiding an injury means no coverage later.

If you are sick — fever, vomiting, diarrhea — you cannot work. Period. Per food safety rules and per common decency. Call out. We will cover. Come back when you are 24 hours symptom-free.

DRUGS & ALCOHOL

Off the clock is yours. On the clock is ours.

The kitchen is sober. Hard-line. We work around fire and knives; impairment is a safety issue, not a vibe one. Off-shift, your time is your own. The bar after close is fine, in

moderation. The next morning you show up sharp or you don't show up. Repeated issues become an HR conversation.

REVIEWS & GROWTH

Six-month check-ins, both directions.

Every cook in the kitchen sits down with Chef Sam and the sous chef once every six months. Twenty minutes. They tell you what you're great at, what to keep working on. You tell them what's working and what isn't — about the kitchen, the schedule, the equipment, the people. Bring honest feedback. Quiet cooks don't grow.

If you want to learn a new station, say so. If you want to stage somewhere else for a week, ask. If you want to know how to become a sous chef, ask Chef Sam. He started where you are.

THE NUMBER THAT MATTERS MOST

Staff turnover. We target below 50% annualized in a business where many kitchens live above 100%. Low turnover is how we get great. If something is off — schedule, pay, treatment, anything — tell us before you leave. We'd rather solve it.

The work is the *whole* thing.

Between the two of us, we have spent a lot of years in kitchens. We have washed dishes, peeled potatoes, broken down whole hogs, run sauté, run fish, run pastry, run the pass. We have worked for chefs we would still work for tomorrow and a few we wouldn't have lasted another shift with. The ones worth working for all had the same thing in common: they cared about the work, they cared about the food, and they cared about the people who showed up to cook it next to them.

That is the kitchen we are building at Old Friend. Not a kitchen where the chef yells. Not a kitchen where the line cook eats the loss when the night goes sideways. A kitchen where the cooking is the whole thing — the craft, the team, the fire, the discipline, the laughter at family meal, and the people we cook for. Get the details right on every plate, every night, and they will feel it. That is the whole job.

We are asking you to do this work with us. If you do, this is the place we hope you stay for years. If you want to move on someday, we'll be the chefs you call for a reference, and we'll mean it.

Welcome to the line.

— Chef Sam Henzy & Chef Joe Monnich