

**BOCANOVA
JACK LONDON SQUARE**



**MEREDITH MELVILLE
GENERAL MANAGER**

A native of Colorado, Melville had the good sense to move to Berkeley in 1973, in the early days of Chez Panisse and the Bay Area food revolution that was to change the way Americans ate. Inspired by what she saw (and tasted), she left town to hitchhike around Europe, and spent a year living in Barcelona. Back in Northern California, she took a job as a server at the pioneering Bay Wolf in Oakland, where she met a young chef named Rick Hackett. She and Hackett went back to Europe, cycling and eating their way through France, Spain, and Portugal, and living for two winters in San Sebastian. The two got married back in the U.S. and Hackett cooked in a series of prominent restaurants while Melville taught English to European students at a private school in Berkeley, and worked in musician management and festival production.

In 1991, the couple went into business together, reopening the historic Enrico's in North Beach. For eight years, they offered patrons nightly jazz, local artworks on the walls, and some of San Francisco's best food and cocktails. It was here that Melville developed her management philosophy. "I believe," she says, "that collaboration is the foundation of growth, and that attention to small details is what creates the integrity of the whole."

When Hackett got the opportunity to open Bocanova, a unique Pan-American Kitchen on Oakland's revived Jack London Square—fast becoming the Bay Area's hottest new restaurant destination—Melville was again at his side, choosing art for the dining room, hiring and training staff, and inspiring the entire restaurant team. "The most important thing we can do as restaurateurs," she says, "is to make each guest's overall experience a comfortable and memorable one. The opportunity to interact with so many different people in so many different ways is what I love most about restaurants. When a restaurant starts to hum, it's theater, it's dance."



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