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**RICHARD PELZ NAMED PROPERTY EXECUTIVE CHEF FOR
WE-KO-PA CASINO RESORT**

FORT McDOWELL, Ariz. – March 22, 2023 – In recognition of his significant contributions since opening Ember – the [We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort's](#) highly acclaimed restaurant – in October 2020, Chef de Cuisine Richard Pelz has been promoted to Property Executive Chef.

In his new leadership role, he will oversee the culinary operations and stewarding departments for the award-winning resort's six dining outlets (Ember, the Buffet, Ahnala, WKP Sports & Entertainment, the Market, and Daubs) as well as for the Banquet kitchen, in-room dining, poolside food service, and special events at Fort McDowell Adventures, another Enterprise of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation.

When Richard joined the We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort in March 2020 as Ember's Chef de Cuisine, he was charged with conceptualizing the restaurant's vision; creating innovative menus; and hiring, training and mentoring its talented and customer-centric staff. Under his guidance, Ember introduced modern cooking techniques, a variety of seasonal menus, and a series of popular wine-themed dinners – all of which contributed to the fine-dining establishment's receiving Wine Spectator's "Best of Award of Excellence" and OpenTable's Diners' Choice Awards for the past two years.

Richard's passion for cooking was ignited at an early age by his parents, who dabbled in winemaking and had a discerning palate for fine cuisine. When he enrolled in the Culinary Institute of America at Hyde Park's hospitality management program, Richard quickly discovered his preference for the back of the house, and proceeded to further hone his culinary talents.

Since then, he has worked at restaurants around the world, many of which boasted Michelin stars, including La Grenouille and La Caravelle (New York City), Le Louis XV – Alain Ducasse (Monte Carlo, Monaco), Restaurante Martin Berasategui (Spain), Alinea (Chicago) and California establishments including Citrine (Hollywood), Bottega and Redd (Napa Valley), Wally's Desert Turtle (Rancho Mirage), and Cork Tree California Cuisine, Augusta Modern and Cuistot (Palm Desert). Richard also owned Goblin Market in New York City, which was nominated for best new restaurant in its first year of operations.

"Chef Richard's vision, passion and culinary expertise have made Ember one of the top dining destinations in Arizona," said Zac Gallo, Executive Director of Food & Beverage for the We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort. "These attributes will position him well to take our property dining outlets to the highest level, ensuring our guests have a delicious dining experience no matter which option they choose."

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