

# Connections

BY MADDIE KING



**From left:** students work with chef mentor Mirko Paderno of the Four Seasons Los Angeles at Beverly Hills; students from the Careers Through Culinary Arts Program in Los Angeles

## Elevated Cuisine

Young chefs help take inflight meals to new heights

Ever wonder what it takes to get a restaurant-style meal at 35,000 feet? That's a quest United set out to solve, which led to our partnership in 2015 with the Chicago-based Trotter Project, a nonprofit organization that furthers Chef Charlie Trotter's legacy of mentorship for youth interested in culinary arts.

When United developed its elevated menu for Polaris last year, the airline tapped Trotter Project chefs for recipe inspiration. Trotter Project chefs from New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco also played a role in developing the menu for United's new premium transcontinental service meals.

But United's partnership with The Trotter Project doesn't stop on board—it expands into the community. This summer, United hosted the Rising Chef Challenge, a competition for high school students who competed to create a tasty onboard meal. The airline looked to The Trotter Project to pair renowned chef mentors with the students as they came up with creative

airplane dishes. The students presented their meals to a panel of judges, including United's managing director of catering operations, Rob Bradford.

"This event gave the students an opportunity to work with some of the top chefs in their hometowns, and I think we opened their eyes to catering careers at an airline that they may have never previously considered," Bradford says. "After seeing the passion these young chefs brought, I think one day we might be looking to some of them for meal inspiration on board."

August 17 kicks off Charlie Trotter Days across the U.S. United will donate \$1 from every Bistro on Board item sold from August 17–20 to the Trotter Project.

### Ask the Pilot with Captain Rob Biddle



Captain Rob Biddle is United's chief pilot in Denver

**Q:** It feels like the aircraft is coasting as it makes its final descent. Is this actually the case, or does landing require consistent acceleration right up until touchdown?

**A:** Our goal is to provide safe, comfortable, on-time, and efficient air travel for our customers. To the latter point, United pilots, with the assistance of our dispatch team, plan for and utilize optimized aerodynamic and energy management strategies through all phases of flight. On descent from cruise altitude, we frequently reduce thrust to idle and descend via a precise vertical path.

The idling engines produce minimal thrust, creating the "coasting" feeling you reference. This tactic also reduces fuel use, emissions, and noise. Once we transition to the landing phase, a moderate amount of thrust is applied to hold a target airspeed as we configure the aircraft for landing. This allows us to execute a stabilized approach, which is characterized by a constant angle and constant rate of descent until the aircraft gently touches down.

You can write to United's chief pilots by addressing [askthepilot@united.com](mailto:askthepilot@united.com)