



# From making sushi to making deliveries

**J**ose Arteché III has culinary genes, which is what led him to run a sushi restaurant before giving it all up to become a letter carrier.

Growing up, his mother was a stay-at-home mom who mainly cooked Okinawan fare for the family. His father

worked in intercontinental hotels, so the family often moved among countries in Africa and Europe. Starting at a young age, Arteché was exposed to a variety of cuisines from around the world. His mom sometimes learned to make dishes from whichever country they were living in at the time.

For example, he said, “We lived in the French country[side] for a number of years, so she learned how to do French cuisine.”

He also enjoyed engaging with food media at a young age.

“I always loved the Food Network and reading the [stories] of *Kitchen Confidential* with Anthony Bourdain,” Arteché said. “I grew up watching, you know, Martin Yan. ... For me, food is one of those comfort things between what my mom always cooked and what I was exposed to.”

He went to college in Albany, NY, where he studied business and computers and met his future wife. After graduating he moved to Miami, FL, to work in business, but said “it wasn’t my cup of tea, so I then moved back up to Albany.” In Albany he began a job as a chocolatier at Krause’s Homemade Candy and enjoyed it, so he decided to enroll in culinary school at Schenectady County Community College to learn more about the art of cooking.

After the candy shop, he worked at Vincenzo’s, a fine dining Italian restaurant with Mediterranean influences, under its head chef. He then worked with head chefs at a Creole restaurant, another Italian restaurant and an Indonesian/French fusion restaurant. Then he moved on to become an assistant culinary partner and corporate chef at PF Chang’s. In this position he moved among between eight locations in the Albany area providing assistance with training, maintaining culinary consistency and providing other support when necessary.

In 2014, his wife’s uncle sold both of them Shogun Sushi & Sake Bar, a restaurant in Albany. “When we first opened, it was great because we had a good profit margin and everything. We were able to hire people and keep it well staffed,” Arteché said.

He enjoyed the creativity he was allowed when creating his menu and sushi rolls.

Jose Arteché III at Shogun Sushi & Sake Bar





“For me it was more fun to create things that were inspired by different flavors and experiences,” Arteche said.

He created a special roll he named the “pastrami bagel roll,” which was a deep-fried roll with cream cheese, avocado and everything bagel seasoning inside. It was topped with pastrami-cured salmon homemade by Arteche himself and finished with a mustard-mayo sauce.

“It’s basically like the taste of New York City, but in a sushi roll,” he said.

He also hosted fine-dining wine dinners at the restaurant for local wine groups, using his skills to pair eight courses with 14 wines.

Although he enjoyed the creative freedom that owning a restaurant brought him, he was working 80 to 100 hours per week, trying to make sure everything at the restaurant went smoothly.

“I was the first one to be at the restaurant and the last one to leave every single night,” he said.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, it took a toll on the business and made their workload even more of a challenge.

“It was during COVID was when everything changed,” he said. “Our food cost skyrocketed.”

Additionally, he found it difficult to find staff.

“For several years I couldn’t take a single day off because we couldn’t find staff,” Arteche said.

Due to the big workload, Arteche and his wife chose to sell the restaurant in 2023.

In search of less stress and more free time with his family, Arteche became a letter carrier, joining Albany Branch 29.

“I found a lot of freedom in joining the post office,” he said.



Although he doesn’t have plans to work in the restaurant industry again anytime soon, Arteche wants to volunteer his skills to help charitable organizations.

“My wife and I joked that when we retire, we could just go get a food truck and do, like, farmers markets, so we can socialize with people,” he said. “I wouldn’t work for the paycheck. Then, I’d do charities, you know? Like if people needed a fundraiser, barbecue or something, I’d do that—basically volunteer to help.”

The carrier still enjoys cooking for himself, family and friends. He cooks for barbecues and appreciates that he is able to make whatever his family members are craving. His food-prepping skills come in handy when he or a family member wants something specific.

“If my wife feels like she wants sushi, I can make it really easy,” Arteche said. **PR**

**Jose Arteche III is now a member of Albany, NY Branch 29.**