



Ellen Chen

Co-Founder and President, Mendocino Farms

After graduating with a degree in economics from University of California San Diego, Ms. Chen became a consultant for the prestigious Accenture Consulting firm where she facilitated the growth initiatives and improvements for top Fortune 100 companies. She honed her business acumen at the marketing firm of Suissa Miller and at dot-com start-up Target Marketing Interactive. After being part of the internet success of the 1990's, Ms. Chen met Mario Del Pero and invested in his restaurant, Skew's Teriyaki, which was one of the first Fast Casual Asian concepts. Together, they grew Skew's to three units in Los Angeles before selling the company in 2001.

Determined to lead through empowerment and build a thriving business from just a good idea and a lot of passion, they created Mendocino Farms and opened their first unit on Bunker Hill in Downtown Los Angeles in 2005. Since then, Mendocino Farms restaurants have opened in thirteen additional locations in Los Angeles and Orange Counties, taking their place as some of the most loved and highest grossing sales per foot restaurants in the neighborhoods they serve. After receiving an investment from private equity firm Catterton Partners and a minority investment from Whole Foods Market, Mendocino Farms is preparing to grow to 25 units by 2018. Ms. Chen continues to offer the restaurant group a big business perspective with an entrepreneur's passion.