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cuisine cures

A personal health crisis sparked a culinary empire, proving that fine dining can be a path to wellness.

BY IZABELLA CANELLE

COURTESY OF THE PICKLED BEET



ELIZABETH WILLARD



What if the key to a successful business wasn't just a great idea, but a health crisis? For Chef

Elizabeth Willard, her personal journey to heal from the autoimmune disease Hashimoto's through food was the genesis of The Pickled Beet, her acclaimed Miami-based culinary company. Her own struggle with severe dietary restrictions inspired her to create a service to help others with similar needs. As she recalls, "After about one month of removing gluten, dairy, soy... I noticed that many of my symptoms had abated." This made her realize food could be a powerful tool for healing, and she decided to rebrand her company to use "food as medicine."

Since 2006, The Pickled Beet has been a quiet force in South Florida, redefining what it means to eat well. This is not another assembly-line meal service; it's a bespoke experience. As Chef Willard explains, "The Pickled Beet is the only company offering gourmet, scratch-cooked, 100% personalized meals in a dedicated gluten-free space." Its masterful chefs meticulously source premium ingredients and tailor every dish to each client's tastes and health requirements. As she says, "All of our clients... enjoy meals that are crafted individually for them."

The team embraces even the most difficult requests as a creative challenge. Chef Willard recalls cooking for clients who were down to just 20 or 30 safe ingredients due to severe health issues. "By the time they call us, they are eating the same two or three meals every day. That, in itself, is creating a downward health spiral." By creating a variety of recipes from a limited ingredient list, The Pickled Beet helps restore not just physical health, but the joy of eating.

For clients ranging from professional athletes to families managing complex health issues, The Pickled Beet offers peace of mind. Every dish is a testament to Chef Willard's philosophy: that food should be a source of healing and joy, not stress. The most rewarding part for her is seeing a client's life improve. She recalls a woman who cried every time she ate due to pain, but who eventually had her "joy about eating again" restored. It's these success stories that reinforce the company's mission, proving that indulgence is never a tradeoff for well-being. | thepickledbeet.com