

BY IRVINA LEW

MODERN MEXICAN MASTER

BOB LEW



Richard Sandoval, chef/owner of Maya in New York City

Mayan masks, majolica plates, and malachite sculptures decorate the hacienda-style backdrop of Maya, Richard Sandoval's bastion of modern Mexican cuisine. Sandoval, the chef/owner of Maya in New York City and San Francisco, and Tomayo in Denver, secured his reputation by combining haute cuisine techniques and presentation with his unique personal élan to create edgy, authentic, and thoroughly modern Mexican dishes.

Sandoval was born in Mexico City and grew up in Acapulco, where he learned about Mexican cooking at his parents' popular restaurant, Madeiras, which overlooks Acapulco Bay. He studied at the CIA and, after returning to Mexico to work, he earned the Toque d'Oro, Mexico's top cooking award, in 1992.