

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**MAKEREADY EXPANDS CULINARY OPERATIONS ACROSS PORTFOLIO WITH THE  
ADDITION OF NEW, HIGH-LEVEL TALENT**

*Justin Fields joins the Makeready Executive Leadership Team while Mike Tarumi leads culinary operations at Noelle in Nashville, Elliot Cunniff spearheads Couvant in New Orleans and Jason Starnes helms F&B at The Alida in Savannah*

**DALLAS, Texas - July 30, 2019** - [Makeready](#), a hotel, restaurant and retail operator and management company designs and delivers experiences with a particular point-of-view: creating a true sense of community led by people that believe in the mission of making personal connections.

As the collection continues to expand its portfolio and add programming to its 20+ award-winning hotels, restaurants and bars, key personnel have recently joined the team:

**Justin Fields, Senior Vice President - Restaurants, Bars and Retail for Makeready**

With a career deep rooted in hospitality, Justin Fields brings creativity, passion, professionalism and a keen eye for detail to each and every restaurant and bar within Makeready. A leader in and out of the kitchen, Fields is inspired by his passion for music and art. He challenges himself and the venues he oversees to think outside the norm and cook beyond what he calls the “typical song.” He aims to break cycles and push innovation and assembles his team as if he were directing a play: define the narrative, create the set and cast the play.

Before calling Makeready home, Fields spent several years in various positions from Executive Chef to Hotel General Manager and eventually Vice President of Hospitality for The Joule (Headington Companies, LLC) in Dallas, Texas. Prior to that, he perfected his skillset in the kitchens of several Ritz-Carlton hotels in destinations such as Amelia Island, Half Moon Bay and Denver.

Fields is a graduate of the Art Institute in Atlanta and is based at Makeready’s home office in Dallas, Texas.

**Mike Tarumi, General Manager Food and Beverage at Noelle**

With more than 15 years of experience as a hospitality professional, Mike Tarumi understands both independent and corporate restaurant companies, and portrays a leadership style focused on building a positive, culture-driven environment for staff, and developing loyal, knowledgeable and friendly service teams that guests can rely on.

Before joining the [Noelle](#) team in Nashville, Tenn., Tarumi was the General Manager of Uchi/Uchiba in Dallas, an award-winning Japanese-inspired restaurant where he elevated the cultural paradigm while creating further financial success for the two concept property. Prior to that, Tarumi spent four years at Raised Palate Restaurants/Headington Companies in Dallas where he started as the opening Service Director before eventually being promoted to the Director of Food and Beverage. As General Manager, Tarumi was able to help elevate the culture and financial results of both acclaimed concepts.

Tarumi earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from San Francisco State University in 2005 and has worked up the ranks in various hospitality sectors to his role as General Manager of Food and Beverage at Noelle. In this position, Tarumi oversees all of Noelle's restaurant and bar concepts and is hyper-focused on contributing to the hotel's long-term strategy to grow and expand property F&B programming.

### **Elliot Cunniff, Executive Chef at Couvant**

Born in upstate New York, Elliot Cunniff was named "Rising Star Chef" by the Albany Chefs' Food and Wine Festival at the young age of 25. Shortly after, Cunniff moved to New York City to work alongside world-renowned Chef Daniel Boulud as the executive sous chef at his signature restaurant, DB Bistro. In 2013, he was sought out by American Chef and Restaurateur David Burke, for whom he worked with for years refining the art of modern American cuisine. And, in 2018, Cunniff joined the Makeready team as Hospitalitarian and has since spent time leading kitchens at their properties in Dallas, Savannah, and New Orleans.

Cunniff's extensive repertoire allows him to jump from barista to bartender, leader to coach and then back again as chef. He brings more than 10 years of culinary experience to his new position as Executive Chef of [Couvant](#) inside the Eliza Jane Hotel in New Orleans, La. In this position, Cunniff oversees menu development and sourcing, while continuing to elevate the classic French fare that has become synonymous with Couvant.

### **Jason Starnes, Executive Chef at The Alida**

Chef Starnes brings more than 20 years of culinary experience in both restaurants and banquet catering to [The Alida](#) in Savannah, Ga. and has joined the team to oversee the diverse on-site culinary offerings including signature restaurant Rhett, rooftop bar The Lost Square, the Trade Room lobby bar and the Pool Bar.

Chef Starnes recently relocated from Atlanta, Ga. where he worked at Barnsley Resort overseeing the food and beverage offerings and banquet kitchen. Prior to that, Starnes served as the Executive Chef of South City Kitchen Buckhead, where he was named one of *Thrillist* Atlanta's 'Best Chefs of 2016' and *Zagat's* 'Under-the-Radar Chefs to Know in Atlanta.' He's also held positions at Atlanta's beloved Sundial Restaurant and with Starwood.

Chef Starnes has found both comfort and creativity in the kitchen, and he has a passion for local cuisine that shines through in the food he creates. This passion for local sourcing, along with his diverse culinary background and portfolio of accolades, aligns perfectly with the spirit of The Alida.

As a North Carolina native, Starnes has a true appreciation for southern hospitality.

Makeready operates notable hotels, restaurants and retail shops throughout the country such as: Noelle, Keep Shop, Hidden Bar and Makeready L&L in Nashville; The Alida and Rhett in Savannah; The Adolphus and Commerce Goods + Supply in Dallas; Couvant in New Orleans; among others. For more information, please visit [www.makereadyexperience.com](http://www.makereadyexperience.com).

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### **ABOUT MAKEREADY**

Designed from the ground up to create truly independent hotel, restaurant, and retail brands with individual points of view, Makeready is a different kind of hotel operator, one that provides an opportunity for travelers to connect to the world around them, city by city and person by person. Makeready is committed to developing independent experiences that are an essential part of each community, cultivating deep, emotional connections across guests, teams, and local brands to create sustainable value for investors. Find us online at [www.makereadyexperience.com](http://www.makereadyexperience.com) or [Instagram](#).

### **PRESS CONTACT**

The Door: [makeready@thedooronline.com](mailto:makeready@thedooronline.com)

Heidi Baldwin Doak: [heidi@thedooronline.com](mailto:heidi@thedooronline.com)

Alex Dorn: [adorn@thedooronline.com](mailto:adorn@thedooronline.com)