

Caswell Restaurant Group

Nancy Batista-Caswell

Proprietor

Few among us can say they found their career and calling in one, but this culinary management alumna of [Johnson + Wales University](#) always knew that her goal was to be a self-styled restaurateur—and would hold every detail from concept to operations close at hand. Informed by her upbringing in a food-centric Portuguese family, Nancy Batista-Caswell applied early operations training under the tutelage of acclaimed restaurateur and prolific cookbook author [Chef Chris Schlesinger](#) and has never looked back. Buoyed by a reputation as a leader among contemporary culinary visionaries, Nancy appeared on *Nation's Restaurant News*' Power List of 2017, received the 2016 [SmartCEO Boston](#) Future 50 Award, and holds the titles of [FSR Magazine](#) "Rising Stars 40 Under 40" 2016 and [StarChefs](#) 'Rising Star Restaurateur' for Coastal New England— a wide swath of exciting dining that includes Maine, New Hampshire, coastal Mass. and the Islands, and Rhode Island.

Her Caswell Restaurant Group, the banner under which Nancy develops, builds, and operates, has earned attention by a variety of media like *USA Today*, *Wine Spectator*, *Taste of the Seacoast*, and *Boston Globe*. Both of her restaurants debuted with *Boston Magazine's* 'Best of Boston' nods, and Ceia's top [Zagat ratings](#) rival any Top 20 Restaurant List in the country. However, don't look for any laurels resting in her office, as Nancy cultivates a team that strives to sustain this excitement with bold menu innovations like New England's first and only 15-course ([Culinary Opus](#)) dinner, wine dinners featuring world-renowned winemakers, and secret diner reports to ensure that excellence is an unwavering standard.

Nancy is a collaborative mentor who works at a blistering pace and accomplishes outcomes that defy geography and time. In 2010, she relocated her [flagship restaurant Ceia](#) to accommodate its popularity and opened its follow-up oyster and chop restaurant [BRINE](#) to rave reviews. In November 2016, she introduced her third restaurant [Oak + Rowan](#) to Boston's burgeoning Fort Point neighborhood.

Her dizzying 'pay it forward' life includes being a Corporator to [Anna Jaques Hospital](#), advising on local business planning and zoning policy, providing learning for cooking apprentices and high school girls who have entrepreneurial goals, and providing under-the-radar support to a variety of community and industry causes, including: [Community Servings](#), [Mass Farmers Markets](#), [Plum Island Conservancy](#), [The Home of the Little Wanderers](#), and the [Newburyport Education Foundation](#), in addition to acting as board chair for the [YWCA](#). She invites employee input in her company's charitable and community service engagements; their creativity produced BRINE's Annual '[Cancer Shucks](#)' fundraiser. In addition, alongside the Newburyport Chamber of Commerce, Nancy is the creative force behind "[Savor Newburyport](#)" a festival that celebrates what makes the community great through wine dinners, a gala, and more.

When Nancy transforms a property into a knockout, she brings her neighbors and longtime employees along for the ride. She is marketing savvy, listens to diners and fellow restaurateurs, and turns accolades into benchmarks for pushing harder. Her architectural and design aesthetics ensure a comfortable ambiance with high functionality. Permitting authorities know her to be meticulous about compliance for construction and licensing. With chefs she has an uncommon culinary command for a collaboration grounded in quality and authenticity; among wine experts, Nancy's depth as a lifelong oenophile is why top vintners cross the ocean opt to personally pour at her wine dinners. She goes out



of her way to source special boutique and small batch wineries that focus on quality over brand promotion.

The rarity of not seeing Nancy out on the floor probably means she's patronizing another restaurant to support her profession. She dines out routinely across all of New England, always inauspiciously, and often with one of her employees for guest experience training and quality offsite time. This earns high praise and respect from fellow proprietors who include the region's celebrity chefs regularly seen at her restaurants for their personal, off-hours dining. Achieving such warmly-acknowledged success while being so likable is the way Nancy thinks business should be done. Whether she is scouring blueprints, reviewing the day's diner comments, or tweaking a menu and its wine pairings with her chefs, being hands-on is the only way this gracious and exciting restaurateur knows to work.