



THE OLD RECTORY *Hotel & Spa*

JOB DESCRIPTION

HEAD CHEF

The Old Rectory Hotel & Spa, Plettenberg Bay

ABOUT THE ROLE

The Old Rectory Hotel & Spa is looking for a talented, thoughtful and hands-on Head Chef to lead the culinary offering at the property.

This role calls for a culinary leader with strong operational, creative and commercial skills, as well as a genuine passion for guest experience. The successful candidate will be responsible for the overall kitchen operation, ensuring that food quality, consistency, team culture and financial performance are consistently upheld.

This is a leadership role for someone who can balance creativity with structure, excellence with efficiency, and high standards with a grounded, people-focused approach.

ABOUT RARE EARTH RETREATS

At Rare Earth, we believe in celebrating differences, nurturing individuality and cultivating gratitude. We value curiosity, kindness, ownership, sincerity and family. Our teams are united by a shared commitment to creating experiences that are meaningful, considered and deeply welcoming. We believe in having a light touch and a whole heart, making our work matter.

OUR VALUES

Creativity – open-minded thinking

Generosity – of spirit, of time, of thought, of knowledge

Individuality – the courage to be unashamedly ourselves and embrace that in others

Fairness – a measured approach that does not discriminate

Humility – being respectful, placing ego aside and championing equality

Curiosity – a desire to learn more about people and the world

Ownership – taking responsibility for your ideas and your role

Family – engendering a sense of belonging among both staff and guests

Sincerity – operating with honesty and a lack of pretence

Kindness – warmth, goodwill and assuming the best in others

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Head Chef will be responsible for:

CULINARY LEADERSHIP

- Developing and executing seasonal, locally inspired menus aligned with the Rare Earth food philosophy: “Simple. Honest. Delicious.”
- Maintaining exceptional standards of food quality, presentation and consistency
- Continuously evolving the culinary offering through innovation and awareness of food trends
- Working in collaboration with the Brand Ambassador for Food and management team to ensure brand alignment

KITCHEN OPERATIONS

- Leading the full day-to-day kitchen operation, ensuring smooth and efficient service delivery
- Overseeing preparation, service, hygiene and quality control across all meal periods
- Maintaining strict adherence to food safety, hygiene and health regulations
- Implementing and maintaining effective kitchen systems and workflows

TEAM LEADERSHIP

- Leading, mentoring and developing the kitchen team
- Building a strong, respectful and high-performing kitchen culture
- Supporting recruitment, training and performance management
- Managing staffing levels and scheduling in line with operational requirements

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Managing food costs, margins and wastage in line with budget and profitability targets
- Overseeing stock control, procurement and supplier relationships
- Ensuring accurate menu costing and contributing to pricing strategies
- Identifying opportunities to enhance revenue through culinary experiences and offerings

GUEST EXPERIENCE

- Ensuring every dining experience reflects the character and standards of The Old Rectory and Rare Earth Retreats
- Collaborating with front-of-house teams to deliver seamless service
- Contributing to special events, activations and bespoke guest experiences

STANDARDS, COMPLIANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Ensuring compliance with food safety standards, company policies and legal requirements
- Driving consistent operational standards and accountability within the kitchen
- Building relationships with local suppliers and supporting sustainable sourcing practices



WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

We're looking for a leader who is:

- experienced in a Head Chef or Senior Sous Chef role within luxury or boutique hospitality
- creative, detail-oriented and passionate about food
- collaborative and open-minded, with the ability to work alongside and take guidance from our Brand Ambassador for Food in shaping and refining the culinary offering
- calm, organised and solutions-focused under pressure
- hands-on and visible in the kitchen operation
- a strong team leader with the ability to inspire and develop others
- commercially aware and financially confident
- passionate about delivering exceptional guest experiences

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

- Minimum 3+ years' experience in a Head Chef or similar leadership role
- Formal culinary qualification from a recognised institution
- Proven ability to create and execute high-quality menus and culinary concepts
- Strong leadership and team management experience
- Solid financial acumen including cost control and stock management
- Strong organisational, administrative and problem-solving skills
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Good understanding of health, safety and hygiene compliance
- Strong computer literacy; knowledge of systems such as TallOrder advantageous

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Warm, grounded and professional
- Honest, dependable and self-motivated
- Detail-oriented and solutions-driven
- Confident without ego
- Curious, generous and willing to teach others
- Able to build strong relationships with both guests and team members
- Aligned with Rare Earth's values and way of working

TO APPLY

Please send your CV to careers@rareearth.co.za with the subject line: "Head Chef for The Old Rectory"

TIMELINES

Interviews will take place during June & July 2026

Appointment effective September 2026

