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Photo by Russ Evans Photography.
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10% OFF FOR ACF MEMBERS
Seize This Opportunity
By Tom Macrina, CEC, CCA, AAC

Hello, students,

A new year is here, and the American Culinary Federation is always looking for ways it can help culinary students and young chefs grow and network with peers and the culinary industry. This is why we are working on developing a Young Chefs Club for ACF. It will be a space where students and young cooks can get together and discuss the industry they care so much about and network with companies and organizations that are interested in the talent ACF’s young chefs have to offer.

The Young Chefs Club is open to all members of the American Culinary Federation ages 18-27. Its purpose is to provide opportunities for young chefs around the U.S. to connect, share information and promote the hospitality industry. We want to build a community of emerging culinary professionals to create networking opportunities with mentors and employers and highlight the accomplishments of ACF’s young chefs.

We understand that your time is limited and you are busy, so we are looking at alternative ways young chefs from across the country can get together. From Google Hangout events to Twitter chats and a Young Chefs lounge at regional conferences and the national convention, we want to make sure you have the opportunity to meet and learn from your peers and the culinary industry.

Now is the time to seize the opportunity to be a leader in this movement and help grow the Young Chefs Club. Though we will provide the tools, we need you—the culinary student, the young cook and the up-and-coming chef—to help us make this a reality.

Visit www.acfchefs.org/YoungChefsClub to learn more about the people behind this movement and sign up to learn how you can start building a community of likeminded peers. I look forward to seeing what ACF’s young chefs can accomplish together.

Sincerely,

Tom Macrina, CEC, CCA, AAC
National President
American Culinary Federation
Product Specialist Manager/Food
Fanatics™ Chef
US Foods, Inc., Philadelphia

get involved!
If you are already a member, email youngchefs@acfchefs.net with your questions on how to get involved. If you are not an ACF member, please fill out a membership form found on the American Culinary Federation website at www.acfchefs.org/Membership.

Look at the Worldchefs Young Chefs Club blog to see what young culinary professionals from across the globe are doing and connect with them.

Connect with ACF Young Chefs Club on social media: 

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**young chef moves**

2013 ACF Western Student Chef wins prestigious stage

Lyn Wells, line chef, Canyon Park Café, Orem, Utah, won first-place honors at the ment’or Young Chefs Competition held October 2014 at Bouchon Beverly Hills in Beverly Hills, California. She competed against three other young chefs. As the winner, Wells received $15,000 and a three-month stage at a restaurant of her choice. The competition was the second in a series of four young chef competitions that took place across the country.

Wells chose The French Laundry, Yountville, California, as the location of her stage and will begin in August 2015. “I still can’t wrap my head around it,” she said. “I’m so excited to have received this honor, and I’m especially excited for the opportunity to mentor at one of the nation’s best restaurants with one of the industry’s leaders.”

For the competition, Wells created three different preparations of beef: a pan-seared, dry-aged rib-eye with a bone marrow glaze; a quick-smoke bacon-cured rib cap; and a braised riblet stuffed in potato boul.

Wells graduated with an associate degree in culinary arts from Utah Valley University (UVU), Orem, Utah, in 2011, and earned a bachelor’s degree in hospitality from UVU in May 2014. In 2013, she was named American Culinary Federation Western Region Student Chef of the Year. Wells is a member of ACF Beehive Chapter.

Chefs top Forbes’ 30 under 30

Forbes recently released its 30 under 30 list with several young chefs in the Food & Drink category. Chefs who made the list are: Kelvin Fernandez, executive chef, La Marina, New York; Cosmo Goss, chef de cuisine, The Publican, Chicago; Vince Griffith (pictured), pastry chef, The Greenhouse Tavern, Cleveland; John Lasater, executive
chef, Hattie B’s Hot Chicken, Nashville, Tennessee; Jonah Miller, owner, Huertas, New York; Stephanie Prida (pictured), pastry chef, Manresa, Los Gatos, California; and Matthew Rudofker, executive chef, Momofuku Ssäm Bar, New York. Judges for Forbes’ 30 under 30 Food & Drink category were Randall Lane, editor, Forbes; Danny Meyer, CEO, Union Square Hospitality Group; and Lee Schrager, founder, South Beach and New York Wine & Food festivals. To view a complete list, visit www.forbes.com/30under30.

Youth Team Supports ACF National Culinary Team

ACF Culinary Youth Team USA members Megan Bamford and Kristyn Granahan had the opportunity to be front and center at a “Taste of the Team” fundraiser held at Hammock Dunes Club, Palm Coast, Florida, Jan. 13. Bamford oversaw a marshmallow dessert bar and created made-to-order rocky road ice cream for attendees. Granahan created and served small plates of oriental pork belly fried bun. The event raised more than $30,000 for the national team.

In addition, new leadership has been named for the youth team. Mark Spelman, CEC, AAC, corporate executive chef, Helen of Troy, El Paso, Texas, and Stafford DeCambra, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC, American Academy of Chefs chair, have accepted the positions of coach and manager, respectively.

Former youth team coach J. Kevin Walker, CMC, director of food, service and clubhouse operations at Grandfather Golf & Country Club, Linville, North Carolina, has stepped down from the coach position. “I wish the youth team all the best, as they are an outstanding group of young people,” said Walker. “The position of coach requires much time and dedication. It is unfortunate my current position no longer allows me to dedicate the time necessary to make the team a success. I am confident that Spelman and DeCambra will do a tremendous job leading the team.”

S. Pellegrino Young Chef 2015 to represent U.S. in Milan

Vinson Petrillo of Zero George Street Hotel and Restaurant, Charleston, South Carolina, has been selected to represent the U.S. at Expo Milano 2015 in June in Milan. He will be competing against 19 young chefs from across the globe for the title of S.Pellegrino Young Chef 2015. Petrillo competed against nine other chefs in the regional U.S. competition for the honor. “As a young chef honing my culinary skills, partaking in the S.Pellegrino Young Chef competition is an incredible opportunity for me to compete against other talented chefs from different parts of the world,” he said. “I am thrilled to have this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

Petrillo prepared a pressurized octopus and wagyu cheek agnolotti with chorizo and octopus ink emulsion for judges who included Paul Qui of qui in Austin, Texas, Blaine Wetzel of Willows Inn on Lummi Island in Washington, Wylie Dufresne of Alder in New York, and Amanda Freitag, costar of Food Network’s “Chopped.”
Congrats to ACF Northeast/Southeast Student winners
Student chefs and cooks from ACF’s Southeast and Northeast regions competed for ACF regional awards during the 2015 ACF Regional Culinary Salons. Southeast competitors went head-to-head at Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Atlanta, Tucker, Georgia, Jan. 10-11. Northeast region cooks competed at Erie Community College, Williamsville, New York, Jan. 17-18. Regional winners of ACF’s Student Chef of the Year, Student Team Championship and Baron H. Galand Culinary Knowledge Bowl will go on to compete for their respective national titles at Cook. Create. Convention & Show, Orlando, Florida, July 30-Aug. 3.

Student Chef of the Year, sponsored by Custom Culinary, Inc.
Southeast
Elxis Dodson, student, The Art Institute of Jacksonville, Jacksonville, Florida; line cook, Roy’s, Jacksonville Beach, Florida; ACF First Coast Chapter.

Northeast
Kathryn Eurich, student, State University of New York at Delhi, Delhi, New York; line cook, The Landmark Inn, Laconia, New York; ACF Chefs and Cooks of the Catskill Mountains.

Student Team Championship, sponsored by Vitamix® Corporation
Southeast

Northeast
ACF Epicurean Club of Boston/Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Boston, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Baron H. Galand Culinary Knowledge Bowl, sponsored by American Technical Publishers
Southeast
Students representing the Culinary Institute of Savannah, Savannah, Georgia.

Northeast
Students representing ACF Eastern Long Island Chefs Chapter, Riverhead, New York.

JWU Students turn chocolate into gold
A team of Johnson & Wales University (JWU) baking and pastry students, Frank Carrieri, of Lindenhurst, New York, Kristina Browning, of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, and Emily Donlon, of Clifton, Virginia, won a gold medal and first place overall at Niagara College's fifth annual Canadian Food and Wine Institute's international student pastry competition, Decadence, held Feb. 21-22, at Niagara College, Niagara Falls, Ontario. Students from Canada and the U.S. competed using just two ingredients: chocolate and ice wine. Other participating colleges were: Fleming College, Cobourg, Ontario, Niagara College and The Pennsylvania School of Culinary Arts, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The JWU team impressed...
the judges with a chocolate showpiece, chocolate entremets, molded and enrobed bonbons, and three individual desserts that were created and completed during the two-day competition.

**culinary education news**

Major in craft beer brewing
Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) and Western Michigan University (WMU), both in Kalamazoo, Michigan, are launching sustainable-brewing degrees fall 2015. The programs were designed so students could earn an associate degree or a certificate at KVCC and move on to obtain a bachelor's degree at WMU. The curriculum was developed with input from 10 of Michigan's top craft brewers and will address some of the industry's pressing issues, such as water use and recovery. To learn more about the degree program, visit WMU's news site.

ACFEF recognizes new programs and new chairs
American Culinary Federation Education Foundation's (ACFEF) Apprenticeship Commission met Jan. 17 at The Hotel Hershey, Hershey, Pennsylvania, to review and recognize seven apprenticeship programs. Two initial programs earning ACFEF recognition are Classic City Chefs & Cooks Association, Athens, Georgia, and Mosaic Culinary Program, Fargo, North Dakota.

The commission welcomed Cindy Komarinski, CCC, CCE, HAAC, Ph.D., professor, Westmoreland County Community College, Youngwood, Pennsylvania, as the new chair, and thanked Kevin Clarke, CCE, JD, culinary director, Colorado Mountain College Culinary Institute, Dillon, Colorado, for his dedication and service. Clarke remains on the committee as immediate past chair. Find a complete list of ACFEF-approved apprenticeship programs at [http://bit.ly/1APx7tE](http://bit.ly/1APx7tE).

In addition, the ACFEF’s Accreditation Commission met Jan. 18-19 at The Hotel Hershey to review and recognize 29 postsecondary programs, including 10 new programs, and 31 secondary programs that included 13 new programs.

Bryan Frick, CEC, AAC, corporate executive chef, Nestlé Professional, Orlando, Florida, was welcomed as the new chair, and Christopher Koetke, CEC, CCE, MBA, HAAC, vice president, school of culinary arts, Kendall College, Chicago, was recognized by the commission for his dedication and service. Koetke remains on the commission as immediate past chair. View a complete list of ACFEF-accredited schools at [http://bit.ly/1CjcdFc](http://bit.ly/1CjcdFc).

During the meetings, culinary students from Pennsylvania's secondary culinary programs and postsecondary programs collaborated to prepare dinner for their respective commissions.

Five secondary culinary programs from Carlisle High School, Carlisle; Cumberland Perry AVTS, Mechanicsburg; Dauphin County Technical School, Harrisburg; Lancaster County CTC, Mount Joy; and Lebanon
County, Lebanon, worked together on a five-course menu. The menu featured a seafood tower, a roast beef carving station; a pasta station featuring such items as crab and shrimp ravioli with a roasted pepper cream sauce; mesclun greens salad with poppy seed vinaigrette handcrafted to order; and a dessert table that included marjolaine, lemon curd and blueberry tarts, and chocolate and raspberry Bavarian cream.

Postsecondary culinary arts program students from Central Pennsylvania’s Community College, Harrisburg, Keystone Technical Institute, Harrisburg, and The Pennsylvania School of Culinary Arts, Lancaster, collaborated on a five-course menu that included a pulled pork/polenta sopas station; sushi-grade seared tuna; seared foie gras with brioche toast and Calvados marmalade; pan-seared duck breast with porcini risotto, wilted power greens, apple-smoked bacon and shiitake reduction. Dessert was rum babas with crème chantilly and assorted petits fours.

**Former ACFEF Apprentices Receive National Recognition**

Ski Tip Lodge in Keystone, Colorado, a sponsor house for the apprenticeship program at Colorado Mountain College (CMC) Culinary Institute, Dillon, Colorado, was named sixth best restaurant on OpenTable Diners’ Choice “2014 Best Restaurants in America” list. The lodge’s executive chef, Brian Baker, is a graduate of CMC’s apprenticeship program, and sous chef Ashley Kegu graduated from the program in 2014.

“It’s pretty spectacular,” said Baker. “I started as executive chef at Ski Tip in 2004. My philosophy is that we put our pride, passion, education and energy into everything we do, and now we have been nationally recognized for creating consistent, upscale cuisine. Last year, we made OpenTable’s top-100 list and we felt like our hard work had finally been recognized. This year, we were named in the top six. This shows that consistency in product and a quality staff in front and back of the house—a majority of who come from Colorado Mountain College’s culinary program—makes a real difference.”

Each year OpenTable analyzes more than 5 million reviews of more than 20,000 restaurants across the U.S. submitted by its verified diners to compile its 100 “Best Restaurants in America” list. No. 1 for 2014 is SeaBlue Restaurant and Wine Bar, North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and, in 2013, St. Francis Winery & Vineyards, Santa Rosa, California, topped the list. Other restaurants on the 2014 list include Michelin-starred restaurants Daniel, New York, and Le Bernardin, New York.

Ski Tip Lodge is a bed-and-breakfast renovated from an 1800s stagecoach stop. The lodge features a four-course revolving dinner menu seven days a week. Menu options range from elk loin and Moroccan spice-rubbed rack of Colorado lamb to juniper cider-cured muscovy duck confit.

“I have had the pleasure of watching Chef Baker grow and mature from a culinary student with a lot of raw talent to a refined technician who has elevated his restaurant into one of the best in the nation,” said Kevin Clarke, CCE, JD, director of culinary education at CMC. “Sous chef Ashely Kegu is a great example of motivation and dedication. She has a natural ability to combine flavors and an eye for plate composition that produces great-tasting and visually appealing dishes.”
CMC has a three-year apprenticeship program. To graduate from the program, apprentices must have accumulated 4,500 hours of experience at an approved sponsor house. To learn more about the program, visit http://bit.ly/1BIfSwQ

Charlie Trotter scholarships awarded
Charlie Trotter’s Culinary Education Foundation, established by Charlie Trotter in 1999 with the goal to educate and expose young people to the culinary arts, partnered in July 2014 with the American Culinary Federation Education Foundation (ACFEF) to award need-based scholarships to culinary students. Because of the Trotter Foundation’s donation, ACFEF was able to award $2,500 to 10 applicants in December 2014. The following students were the first to receive this scholarship.

- Catherine Brown, White Mountains Community College, Berlin, New Hampshire
- Garrett Couvillon, Louisiana Culinary Institute, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- Whitley Delaney, The French Pastry School, Chicago
- Amie Genovese, Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Las Vegas
- Alexis Hicks, Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Las Vegas
- Lahela Kaiwi, Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Las Vegas
- Justin Lambert, Louisiana Culinary Institute
- Nicholas Glenn, Louisiana Culinary Institute
- Mica Salter, Louisiana Culinary Institute
- Dustin Wesley, Louisiana Culinary Institute

To check deadlines and apply for other ACFEF culinary scholarships, visit www.acfchefs.org/scholarships.
slice of life

Paola Schwartz

age
36

education
Associate degree from Southcentral Kentucky Community & Technical College (SKYCTC) Culinary Arts program, Bowling Green, Kentucky, in 2014; bachelor’s degree in communications from Universidad del Valle de Mexico, Mexico City, 2002.

why I chose SKYCTC
After reviewing the cost and quality of SKYCTC’s academic program, it was the best choice for me.

work
Garde manger at The Club at Olde Stone, Bowling Green; 4-month internship at The Sunflower Cafe, Nashville, Tennessee; Volunteer in the Office of Sustainability at Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green.

most interesting lesson
My experience has taught me that cost and control management are essential in the restaurant business. Sanitation and safety should be taken seriously, and the performance of every person involved in food preparation should be monitored.

career plans
My dream is to become a health-supportive chef, which means I will have the ability to adapt menus and recipes for people with allergies and/or food intolerances. In addition, I want to gain the experience I need to become an ACF-certified personal chef.
10:00 a.m.
On arrival, I wash my hands and clear and sanitize my work area. I help with last-minute ingredient preparations for the buffet, which opens in an hour. Some of my tasks include washing kale, chopping carrots and celery, preparing caprese salad, assembling cold foods in the buffet, and displaying the daily soups and wraps.

11:00 a.m.
It’s cleanup time again. I clear and sanitize all work areas and sweep the floors. Vegetables that are in boxes are put in their appropriate places, and those that have to be stored clean are soaked in water. After all the vegetables and food are put away, I am told to use what is available in the pantry and create a vegan soup that is, preferably, gluten-free. I find a box of cabbage that needs to be used, and decide to make cream of cabbage soup.

12:30 p.m.
Rush hour has begun. I help the sous chef keep food warm, steam kale and restock the buffet. The buffet usually has two soups, cold wraps, four hot items that are the main courses, steamed kale with sesame oil and umeboshi vinegar, homemade beans, saffron rice, quinoa, three tossed salads, three or more bound salads, three types of hummus and two desserts. If needed, I also assist on the buffet line so customers do not have a long wait. When I go back to the kitchen, I start to make hummus for the night buffet. I begin to discuss ideas for the dessert with the sous chef.

2:00 p.m.
While I think about a dessert recipe, I am told to start a batch of mock chicken salad. First, I gather the ingredients, then wash the celery and apples, soak the apples, steam tempeh, chop celery, squeeze fresh lemon juice and measure plum vinegar. To refrigerate the salad, I use the FIFO method to rearrange the area where I will place it. When I go back to the kitchen, I am told I can decide which dessert I want to make tonight.

3:00 p.m.
I decide to make vegan toffee pecan pudding. The restaurant slows down and I am able to make my dessert. After I finish, I let the pudding rest for a few minutes. The sous chef tries it and decides it will be served on the buffet.

4:30 p.m.
It is time to clean the kitchen again and sanitize the thermometers used to test the temperature of the food before it was served. I help organize the spices and dry storage. After a long, busy afternoon, things have been moved and boxes have been left open.

5:00 p.m.
We have less than 30 minutes before the dinner rush. The sous chef asks me to portion vegan burgers on trays. I portion, form patties and, place the burgers in the oven set the timer, and I then begin to help prep such main dishes as vegetarian shepherd’s pie.

6:45 p.m.
I help close the kitchen. I move the prep tables to sweep up the food that falls on the floor between the cracks. I mop and sanitize prep areas, clean sinks and shut down the equipment, except for the steamer in case more food will need to be heated for the buffet.

8:00 p.m.
I clock out and I am ready to go home. It has been a long day, but a great day. I am proud of what I accomplished and glad to be of help to the restaurant.
coquilles St. Jacques, or St. James scallops, is a classic French dish. Simply put, it features a delicate sea scallop covered in sauce duxelles and breadcrumbs, served in the colorful shells in which the scallop once lived.

The history behind this classical dish predates medieval times. The scallop shell is the emblem of St. James the Greater and is considered the badge of the pilgrim. This is not a dish medieval Christians would have eaten, however, they did take scallop shells from the Galicia beach at Santiago de Compostela, Spain, as proof that they had completed the journey to pay homage to St. James. This popular scallop dish was recreated in *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (Alfred A. Knopf, October 1961) by Julia Child, Simone Beck and Louisette Bertholle. It is often made to celebrate National Baked Scallops Day, March 12, or National Coquilles St. Jacques Day, May 16.

When Dawn Viola, chef instructor at Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Orlando, Florida, began to research classical recipes for this article, she was looking for something that would ease her student partner into Escoffier. “If one has never read Escoffier, it can be overwhelming,” says Viola. “Constructing a recipe from Escoffier is like a scavenger hunt. The recipe is the map sending you on an adventure through the book’s pages in search of sauces and techniques described in the recipe.”

Viola’s partner, Roberto Aristondo, is a student at Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Orlando. He compares learning classical cooking techniques to learning how to play basketball. “First, I needed to learn such basic skills as pass, dribble, how to shuffle my feet and rebound,” he says. “All this was to prepare me to do killer crossovers and reverse layups. I was able to move on to techniques that are more complex, because I knew the game’s fundamentals. Classical dishes are that—fundamentals of the cooking game.”

There are several culinary lessons to gain from this recipe for students attempting both versions of the dish, says Viola. They will learn how to balance seasonings and make sausage and classical sauces. Most important, they will learn how to properly cook scallops. “Pay attention to your food when cooking it,” says Viola. “It talks to you and gives clues as to when it’s done.” Scallops, like meat, indicate doneness by touch, and their preferred temperature is medium-rare. When this temperature has been reached, they look opaque on the outside, while the inside will waver between translucent and opaque and be slightly springy to the touch.
classical

COQUILLES ST. JACQUES AU GRATIN
1. The scallop is first poached in white wine and herbs until barely opaque and then finished in the oven.
2. Classic gratin, according to Escoffier, is breadcrumbs with melted butter that are toasted in the oven.
3. Sauce duxelles made with mushrooms is a defining flavor profile for the classical dish.
4. Colorful scallop shells hold the components of the dish and are part of the presentation.

modern

PROCINI-DUSTED SEAFOOD SAUSAGE
1. Sausage made with scallops and white fish replaces the single scallop and is more cost-effective.
2. Mushroom straws replace the breadcrumbs and give the recipe a lighter texture and flavor.
3. Mixed microgreens tossed in a lemon vinaigrette replace the parsley from the classic recipe.
4. Mushroom beurre blanc is made from the poaching liquid used to cook the seafood sausage and is a nod to the classical dish’s flavor profile.
Aristondo attends culinary school at night and is a law enforcement officer by day. But cooking has always been in his blood. He is first-generation Cuban-American, and both his grandparents owned restaurants in Miami and Hialeah, Florida. His earliest memories are of “helping” on the weekends by stacking cups, and putting away plates and silverware, or waking up at 3 a.m. to help his “Papa Martin” make chicharrón with pork belly and black beans. At age 6, he ordered his first shrimp enchilada. By age 12, he was learning the fundamentals of cooking such items as rice, steak and chicken from his grandmother.

After high school, Aristondo got lost on his career path. He says he had never heard of Coquilles St. Jacques, but once he tried it, he was impressed with its flavor. “It was rich, but still left you with room for more,” he says. His favorite part of the dish’s preparation was learning how to make sauce duxelles. “I think it is a wonderful way to add another level of flavor to dishes.”

Interpreting Escoffier’s recipe was the biggest challenge. When asking other chefs how they interpreted Escoffier’s scallop recipe, Aristondo received several different answers, from the type of breadcrumb to use to including cheese. Another challenge was sea scallops’ availability. It was difficult to source local shell-in scallops during winter.

He did not encounter big problems with the techniques of the recipe, but a point of concern for Aristondo was overcooking the scallops, as the recipe calls for them to be cooked twice in different applications. The dish became challenging for him when he began to assemble it in the shell. It was the first time he had ever plated a dish such as this.

He has several tips for students attempting the recipe on their own. Be careful with the amount of salt used in the poaching liquid, as scallops are naturally salty. Poaching should be done at a low temperature. And when baking the final dish, ensure a crispy gratin by ignoring the impulse to constantly check on it.

For students who want to put their spin on the classic recipe, he suggests using minimal breadcrumbs to showcase the scallop. “I felt the scallop should be on exhibit and not hiding under the gratin, but instead, highlighted by it.”

---

**Gratin**

**Ingredients:**
- 2 T. white wine, divided
- Sliced mushrooms
- 1 cup fine breadcrumbs, divided
- 4 T. unsalted butter, melted
- 1 T. finely chopped flat leaf parsley
- Lemon wedges

**Method:**
1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Thick slice scallops; chop coral. Coat each scallop shell with sauce duxelles and ½ t. white wine.
2. Place sliced scallop and coral on top of sauce; surround with mushroom slices. Cover with sauce duxelles. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs. Cover with melted butter. Place in oven; bake until breadcrumbs are golden and mushrooms cooked.
3. Remove from oven; sprinkle with lemon juice and chopped parsley. Serve immediately.

---

**Classical St. Jacques au Gratin**

**Yield:** 4 servings

**Scallops**

**Ingredients:**
- 4 fresh in-shell scallops
- ½ cup white wine
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup onion, sliced
- 3 parsley stems
- 1 small sprig fresh thyme
- ½ fresh bay leaf
- pinch kosher salt
- 3 whole peppercorns

**Method:**
1. Clean outside of shells. Remove scallops, including coral and beard; rinse to remove debris. Set aside. Scrub inside of shells; set aside.
2. In small pan, combine wine, water, onion, parsley, thyme, bay leaf, salt and pepper; add scallops. Shallow poach over medium-low heat until scallops just reach opaque, about 6 minutes.

**Dry duxelles**

**Ingredients:**
- 16 oz. medium button mushrooms, cleaned, stems removed, divided
- 3 T. unsalted butter
- 3 T. olive oil
- 1 T. onion, minced
- 1 T. shallot, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 T. flat leaf parsley, chopped

**Method:**
1. Thinly slice four mushrooms; set aside. Finely chop remaining mushrooms. Place in cheesecloth or clean towel; squeeze to remove excess moisture.
2. In large saute pan, heat butter and oil over medium heat. Add minced onion and shallot; cook 3 minutes. Stir in mushrooms; add salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and liquid has evaporated.
3. Season with salt and pepper; stir in parsley. Reserve.

**Sauce duxelles**

**Ingredients:**
- Poaching liquid from scallops
- ½ cup mushroom liquor
- 1 T. shallot, minced
- 1 T. demi-glace
- 1 T. tomato puree
- Dry duxelles
- 1 T. flat leaf parsley, chopped

**Method:**
1. In small saucepan, combine reserved poaching liquid, mushroom liquor, shallot, demi-glace, tomato puree and dry duxelles. Simmer 5 minutes.
2. Remove from heat; stir in parsley. Reserve.
modern

Dawn Viola didn’t start her career in the culinary industry. With a bachelor’s degree in fine arts from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, she worked in the advertising industry for more than a decade. She then discovered that she had multiple food allergies and switched her career focus. She enrolled in culinary school and earned a diploma in culinary management from Valencia College, Orlando. She then applied her experience to writing and marketing in the culinary industry, and has written and tested recipes for Food Network and such companies as Applegate Farms and Jamie Oliver’s Food Revolution. She has also ghost authored several cookbooks for chefs. Viola’s experience includes executive sous chef for catering at Le Coq Au Vin, Orlando, and executive chef at Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida, Orlando. Now she is pursuing a master’s degree in holistic nutrition.

Viola grew up in a big Italian family where food was a part of everything. Her favorite memory as a child was waking up on Sunday to the smell of gravy, which for Italians is red tomato sauce with meatballs, sausage and/or braciola, “I would immediately head to the stove, tear Italian bread into chunks, stand on my tiptoes and dunk the bread in the pot for breakfast,” she says. She always had a passion for cooking. When she discovered her food allergies that passion became the catalyst for her to become a chef and teach others how to cook.

Coquilles St. Jacques was intriguing to Viola because there are various interpretations of the dish. Escoffier’s recipes are different from what is served in restaurants. She had prepared a version of the dish as a culinary student and had eaten versions as a teenager, but it was always made with bay scallops, the sauce contained either cream or cheese, and the scallop’s coral was not included in the dish. The classic gratin recipe uses sauce duxelles and toasted breadcrumbs with butter. Viola’s modern version stays true to Escoffier’s original flavors and textures, but it is lighter and cost-effective. By creating seafood sausage with scallops and white fish, chefs will be able to stretch the scallop season longer and keep costs down. The mushroom beurre blanc, along with the porcini dust and mushroom straws, introduce the flavors found in the classic duxelles. The lemon-dressed microgreens provide acid and replace the original recipe’s chopped parsley. The mushroom straws replace the texture of the breadcrumbs.

Viola’s advice for students, or anyone creating a modern version of a classical recipe, is to always stay true to either the flavor profile or the recipe’s technique. Without at least one of those components incorporated into the modern version, you’ve deviated too far and created a brand-new recipe, she says.

**Procini-dusted seafood sausage**

*Yield: 4 servings*

**Boudin blanc**

*Ingredients:*
1 egg white  
1 ½ oz. heavy cream  
1 slice white bread, crust removed  
2 oz. white fish fillets or trimmings  
2 (12/20) scallops  
½ t. kosher salt  
Pinch white pepper  
1 T. fennel, chopped  
1 T. parsley, chopped  
1 ½ cups mushroom liquor  
¼ cup fish fumet  
2 T. white wine  
1 T. minced shallot  
1 bunch celery leaves  
1 sprig fresh thyme  
3 T. dried porcini dust  
Salt and white pepper to taste

*Method:*
1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Prepare a buttered cartouche, set aside. In small bowl, whisk egg white and cream. Press bread into cream mixture to make panade, set aside.

**Mushroom beurre blanc**

*Ingredients:*
½ cup poaching liquid  
1 T. white wine vinegar  
1 small shallot, minced  
8 T. unsalted butter, divided  
Salt to taste

*Method:*
1. Reduce poaching liquid to about 1 ½ cup.
2. Strain; transfer to small saucepan. Add vinegar and shallot; bring to a boil. Stirring occasionally, reduce to 1 T., about 6 minutes.
3. Strain mixture. Return liquid to pan reduce heat to low; whisk in butter, 1 T. at a time, until mixture is thick. Remove from heat. Keep warm until ready for service.

**Microgreens**

*Ingredients:*
½ cup assorted microgreens  
Olive oil to taste  
Fresh lemon juice to taste  
Salt and pepper to taste

*Method:*
1. In small bowl, dress greens with olive oil, lemon, salt and pepper right before plating.

**Mushroom straws**

*Ingredients:*
16 oz. expeller-pressed coconut oil, or other neutral oil, for frying  
½ lb. large button mushrooms, cleaned, julienned  
Salt to taste  
1 cup cornstarch, divided  
1 egg, beaten

*Method:*
1. In small saucepan, heat coconut oil to 350°F. Season mushrooms with salt.
2. Divide cornstarch evenly between two bowls. Dredge seasoned mushrooms in cornstarch, egg and second cornstarch bowl.
3. Lower into hot oil; fry until crisp, about 1 minute. Remove from oil to paper-towel-lined sheet pan; sprinkle with salt.

*Assembly:*
1. Place 1 T. beurre blanc in center of appetizer plate.
2. Place sausage on top.
3. Top with dressed microgreens and mushroom straws.
Well-planned and executed single dinner or series provide the opportunity for chefs to build a menu, a reputation and a following. // By Jody Shee

Imagine launching your culinary career on a helipad next to a helicopter serving chili prawns with candied walnuts, hearts of palm and scallions. You plate Brussels sprouts with chili, lime and mint while 20 guests talk, communal-style, at white-tablecloth covered folding tables and covered folding chairs.

These are the type of pop-up restaurant experiences that keeps chefs energized and foodies entertained.

Executive chef Gregory Gourdet, who actually has chili prawns and Brussels sprouts on the menu at his restaurant, Departure Restaurant + Lounge, Portland, Oregon, remembers his first experience eating at a pop-up restaurant. “It was a monthly lunch pop-up set up in restaurants around town with an amazing line of ramen with different types of broth and garnishes,” he says. That pop-up endeavor spawned two brick-and-mortar Portland restaurants: Boke Bowl East and Boke Bowl West.

Gourdet considers Portland a food-focused town with many young chefs itching to branch off and do different things—him included. “Pop-up” is a term bestowed on the events that result, he says. The dining experiences usually are held at an existing restaurant during its normal off-hours, at a random space or somewhere out in a field.

“The ‘pop-up’ term is thrown around a lot, and some would argue that it’s lost its meaning,” Gourdet says. “But it’s a vehicle for creativity—a way for chefs to have another outlet.” Some chefs want to expand beyond their four walls, experiment with an alternate concept or work with different ingredients.
Preparations are nearly complete for a Dinner Lab pop-up event in a Los Angeles warehouse.

Photo courtesy of Dinner Lab
“One reason pop-ups have taken off the way they have is that chefs are just like the people they are cooking for. They are millennials who want the opportunity to experience new and different things,” says Andrew Freeman, president of San Francisco-based Andrew Freeman & Co., restaurant and hospitality consultants. Guests get to be part of the chef’s experiment.

Pop-ups will be around as long as young aspiring chefs find spaces that will help them find their voice, says John Manion, chef/owner of Chicago’s La Sirena Clandestina. “That’s always going to happen. It’s always happened, but it’s been popularized recently, especially with social media.”

GUIDING CIRCUMSTANCES
Freeman sees several pop-up purposes. Besides allowing chefs to expand beyond the restaurant concepts they are locked into, it also allows them to partner with a friend or someone they have always wanted to work with. It provides the opportunity to get true feedback on a concept’s viability before making a big investment. Finally, from a marketing standpoint, it’s a chance to invite media and create buzz around a new project, he says.

During recent colder, slower months, Gourdet conducted a monthly Sunday night pop-up he called his compass dinner series. He featured food from such parts of the world as China, Japan and Haiti. While he used his normal kitchen crew to help, for his “Silk Road” dinner he worked with local seafood chef Ken Norris to highlight fish from such locales along the Silk Road as China, India, Greece and North Africa. Also working with his Portland fish purveyor Flying Fish, Co., the dishes combined Gourdet’s Asian cuisine leanings with Norris’ Mediterranean sensibilities.

To advertise the dinner series, Gourdet sent out Facebook invites, posted...
information on the restaurant website, used Instagram and pitched the series to local writers. “We got great buzz,” he says.

Manion was a chef who left his job to open his dream restaurant. Then, at the last minute, the restaurant fell through. He had the concept and a team ready to go when the deal fell apart. “It was really a blow. We had to do something. I knew a woman who owned a cafe that was only open for breakfast and lunch,” he says. She agreed to allow him to use her spot as a pop-up location for two nights in August 2011.

“The air conditioning wasn’t amazing,” he says. To match the hot atmosphere, he put together a “beachy Brazilian” menu, with a friend playing appropriate music. It sold out. All agreed to do it again, and eventually he made a deal to go into the space as a majority partner. Thus, La Sirena Clandestina was born, serving Brazilian fare. The “clandestine” reference is a nod to its secret pop-up roots.

Manion reminisces, “I have a friend who had a pop-up bar in an elevator. Sometimes things are more funny than profitable.”

CONSIDER THE CHALLENGES

For those planning on a pop-up with a goal of launching a restaurant, don’t count on pop-ups to raise funds for a brick-and-mortar location. “You have to understand the business side of it. Your margins won’t be great buying product for one or two nights,” Manion says. “Think of what you will pay the restaurant owner. Then you need insurance. It’s a real cost.”

There’s no way to define the challenges and solutions across the board, as every pop-up situation is different. The space can cause issues, as can the timing. “When we did it, we were in and out twice. I didn’t know (the owner’s) equipment. These are things you have to think about,” he says.
Manion paid the owner a flat fee to hold a pop-up in her restaurant. After he paid all the help, he didn’t make a lot of money, “But that wasn’t the point,” he says.

The purpose of a pop-up is not to fund a restaurant, but to gain visibility, says Robin Song, executive chef at Hog & Rocks in San Francisco. He conducted a pop-up hybrid in his ham and oyster bar by presenting a menu focused on his native Korean food on typically quiet Thursday nights from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. in August and September 2014.

He suggests that from a successful pop-up series, you may be able to fund the hiring of a graphic designer to create a website for a planned restaurant. “You can get money to start the process to build your identity and logo. That could be a first process,” he says.

While you don’t get rich from pop-ups, you can start to create a customer base and demonstrate you have a viable concept for the market, Song says. “So when you do open a restaurant, it’s not such a shot in the dark. You have followers. It’s market tested.”

Pop-up restaurants have logistical challenges to consider, Freeman says, especially if you go into a space without tables and chairs or everything required to run a restaurant. If you choose to do the pop-up in an already functioning restaurant, there may be a cost for displacing the restaurant’s income. Additionally, if you don’t have a following, it could be difficult to fill the seats. “A secondary challenge comes if your food doesn’t resonate and people don’t enjoy it as much as you hoped they would. You open yourself up to critical feedback. You may need that. But be prepared for anything to happen,” he advises.

Fortunately, there are pop-up opportunities that lessen the challenges. New Orleans-based Dinner Lab launched in October 2012 to showcase emerging chefs in a pop-up environment. It now operates in 21 cities and counting.

“We give chefs a platform to beta test new ideas or work creatively outside
the confines of a restaurant,” says Byron Stithem, director of curation. Sometimes participants are sous chefs or line cooks who work night after night on someone else’s menu with little creative input.

Dinner Lab provides the opportunity for them or any chef with a concept in mind to test it with little risk. “We handle all the backend sourcing, staffing, procurement and commissary kitchens,” Stithem says. The chef simply puts together the menu and helps Dinner Lab staff execute it at the chosen site.

The company is a member-based organization. Consumers in each of the 21 cities pay a membership fee for the opportunity to purchase $50-$60 tickets to the sometimes weekly pop-up five-course dinner events, which are always held in an unconventional secret location. Some were a helipad, boxing ring, exotic car dealership, school gymnasium and a Mardi Gras float warehouse. A full-time staff in each city handles all the details.

Chefs who desire to participate fill out a form online and attach a resume. One of the biggest advantages for chefs is the opportunity to learn from the feedback. Using a survey card on the dinner table, guests rate each dish for creativity, taste and restaurant worthiness, with an opportunity to add comments. They also receive a follow-up survey that asks a few additional questions in order to make the feedback as comprehensive as possible, Stithem says.

He encourages culinary students to stage at an event to see if they are interested. If it’s a good fit, the Dinner Lab chef de cuisine in that city might hire them to work future events. The opportunity puts students in front of many chefs and opens the possibility of students eventually putting together their own menu and becoming a featured chef.

Jody Shee, an Olathe, Kansas-based freelance writer and editor, has more than 20 years of food-writing experience and writes the blog www.sheefood.com.

POP-UP POINTER:
When getting started, choose something easy to execute until you become more comfortable. Don’t overspend yourself with too many menu offerings.

— Robin Song, executive chef, Hog & Rocks, San Francisco.

opposite: Kwame Onwuachi greets guests and shares the story behind his food at a Dinner Lab pop-up event in Nashville, Tennessee. Photo by Ryan Green
below: Diners mingle at a Dinner Lab pop-up event in New Orleans. Photo by Reaux Photo
Chefs across the nation are raising awareness of underutilized seafood with unique recipes and creative dinners.

By Rob Benes
The global fishing fleet operate at 2.5 times the sustainable level, and 85 percent of the world’s fisheries are either fully exploited, overexploited or have collapsed, according to the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch, Monterey, California.

Overfishing continues to bring new regulations for catching such fish as grouper, tuna, marlin and others. With these changes, fishmongers are further exploring oceans, rivers and streams to offer restaurants unusual catches. There’s a growing appreciation by chefs, as well as guests, for underutilized seafood, and it’s changing menus across the country.

**culinary advantages**

Ransom explains there are three culinary advantages to using underutilized seafood. First, chefs are not only supporting sustainability, but they are creating a new market for the fishing industry by using bycatch seafood. Next, unusual seafood tastes good, and it brings attention to a restaurant’s culinary program by presenting a new dining experience for guests. Finally, underutilized seafood provides new challenges for culinary teams to learn how to butcher and clean, as well as which cooking methods work best for different types of seafood.

**on menus**

Paul Prudhomme’s blackened redfish, a favorite at his French Quarter restaurant K-Paul’s Louisiana Kitchen, New Orleans, was imitated in restaurants across the U.S. Before long, Louisiana redfish were being caught and shipped around the country. Overexploitation led to a ban on commercial fishing of redfish in 1988, and many chefs turned to farm-raised or frozen redfish sourced from outside Louisiana.

Anthony Scanio, executive chef, Emeril’s Delmonico, New Orleans, keeps the tradition of blackened fish on the menu, but he now uses black drum instead of overfished red drum, or redfish, in preparing Louisiana drum meunière. Black drum is a saltwater fish and similar to red drum in taste and texture. He could use farm-raised redfish from Texas, but it costs about $14 per pound.

New England has relied on cod for years. A staple fish that was always

Lesser-known seafood, often thrown back because of lack of interest or misunderstanding, are actually flavorful, sustainable substitutes for popular and at-risk fish. “Bycatch seafood is a welcomed catch, and something that now is sought after by both restaurants and consumers,” says Michael Ransom, executive chef, B&O Brasserie, Baltimore.
around, it is no longer easy to get. Chefs now rely on other species, such as hake, redfish and weakfish. “You need to have a mixture of seafood on your menu,” says Jeremy Sewall, executive chef/owner, Lineage, Brookline, Massachusetts, and Island Creek Oyster Bar and Row 34, both in Boston. “It needs to be balanced and a mix of traditional and nontraditional, being mindful of sustainability.”

Pablo Estrada, executive chef/owner, Fattoria e Mare, Burlingame, California, likes the challenge that comes from working with nontraditional seafood. “It’s educational and satisfying when you achieve success,” he says. A type of seafood that challenges him is cuttlefish, which he serves with black squid ink over polenta. It’s not a fish, but a relative of squid and octopus found in the Mediterranean and Southeast Asia. It tastes like a cross between them, with a fuller flavor than calamari but not as rich as octopus.

He cleans it by cutting just below the eyes to free the legs, cutting out the little beak, removing the icky stuff in the head and taking out the cuttle bone, which is a hard centerpiece of cartilage. Cuttlefish, like squid, must be cooked in one of two ways, because its muscles are dense with enormous amounts of connective tissue: flash fry the legs and body, which are typically cut into rings, or stew it for hours.

Ransom uses blue catfish from the Chesapeake Bay, which gets confused with channel catfish. It is a bottom feeder, but has a clean, fresh flavor. This species’ firm texture holds up to long cooking times and is perfect for stews. Blue catfish is also good for smoking. When smoked, it’s a firm fillet that emulates a smoked ham hock. Ransom uses it in greens and stews to impart a Southern smoky taste.

Ben Pollinger, executive chef, Oceana, New York, offers underutilized seafood as appetizers that include black sea bass crudo and fluke tartare and entrees such as skate wing and whole-roasted dorade.

seafood guide
Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch, Monterey Bay, California, provides an online sustainable seafood search. The tool makes recommendations on which seafood to buy or avoid and provides help finding seafood that are fished or farmed in ways that have less impact on the environment. There is a downloadable guide on recommendations, where seafood items are rated as “Best Choices,” “Good Alternatives” or “Avoid.” It is available as an app that provides up-to-date recommendations for ocean-friendly seafood and sushi. (www.seafoodwatch.org)
Collaborative’s 2011 Sustainable Food Summit in New Orleans. Chefs Collaborative, a national nonprofit founded in 1993 by a group of visionaries who include Rick Bayless, Nobu Matsuhisa and Alice Waters, is on a mission to change people’s perception about underappreciated fish.

“Chefs Collaborative’s trash fish dinners are unique because they were created and implemented by teams of inspired chefs,” says Sara Brito, executive director. “Through these dinners, we’ve seen dozens of chefs collaborate in kitchens across the country to feature undervalued seafood species on their menus.”

Pollinger helps support local oyster farmers by featuring New York raised oysters, such as Naked Cowboy® Oysters, Widow’s Hole, Fishers Island and great southern bay. “Using underutilized seafood does not always mean those that are a result of bycatch,” he says.

**trash fish dinners**

Trash fish dinners were dreamed up by member chefs during Chefs Collaborative’s 2011 Sustainable Food Summit in New Orleans. Chefs Collaborative, a national nonprofit founded in 1993 by a group of visionaries who include Rick Bayless, Nobu Matsuhisa and Alice Waters, is on a mission to change people’s perception about underappreciated fish.

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The first dinner was held March 10, 2013, at executive chef/co-owner Michael Leviton’s Area Four in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Nine chefs teamed up to serve a multicourse, family style meal that featured...
underappreciated seafood species such as monkfish, sea robin and blood clams.

“The inaugural trash fish dinner sold out quickly,” says Brito, “and we soon found member chefs collaborating to plan dinners in other U.S. cities. In 2013 and 2014, we took trash fish on the road to Las Vegas, Chicago, Los Angeles, Portland, Denver, Sarasota and Charleston.”

In Chicago, 10 chefs teamed up at chef/owner Paul Fehribach’s Big Jones in May 2013. Working with Chefs Collaborative’s environmental partners at Shedd Aquarium in Chicago and Monterey Bay Aquarium, chefs served up invasive species that included Asian carp, rainbow smelt, sea speckled trout and bluefish.

“When we diversify and balance what we take from the ocean, we can enjoy new delights while preserving old ones,” says Fehribach, a Chefs Collaborative board member.

Seven chefs teamed up at Border Grill Las Vegas July 22, 2013. Menu highlights included Rick Moonen’s bycatch bouillabaisse, sea robin ceviche and surf-clam sashimi.

“By featuring so-called "trash fish" on their menus, chefs are building awareness of and demand for more sustainable seafood options,” Brito says. “Through the dinners, chefs and culinary professionals are shining a spotlight on the need to diversify our seafood choices and helping to sustain fishing communities.”

November 12, 2013, Cathy Whims, chef/owner of Nostrana and Oven & Shaker, both in Portland, Oregon, cooked with wolf eel, pacific skate wing and sand dabs. Local artists and chefs also teamed up to auction off trash fish art and special meals.

June 5, 2014, at Lowndes Grove Plantation, Charleston, South Carolina, a star lineup of local chefs treated diners to underappreciated fish such as amberjack, whitegrunt, little tunny, Spanish mackerel and jolthead porgy.

Brito says the dinners are a powerful tool for creating change in the seafood industry. “When chefs help create a market for undervalued seafood, they help take pressure off overfished species, sustain fishing communities and build demand for more sustainable seafood options. We’re excited to see this dinner series evolve over time.”

To learn more about Chefs Collaborative, visit www.chefscollaborative.org.

Rob Benes, a Chicago-based journalist, has 11 years of experience writing about chefs, food, wine and spirits for trade, educational and consumer publications.

recommended reading

School of Fish (Gallery Books, 2014).

This cookbook by Ben Pollinger, executive chef, Oceana, New York, claims to be the all-encompassing culinary education on cooking seafood. With more than 100 recipes organized by practices from easiest to most advanced, techniques for preparing underutilized fish such as sea robin are included. Additional features include a guide to unusual ingredients and step-by-step photos with the recipes.
Let Them Decorate Cake

Cake decorating is more than just a hobby. Pastry chefs with artistic talent, patience and a little imagination can make a living doing something they love.

By Suzanne Hall

Gum paste, buttercream and royal icing are the tools. Imagination, patience and perseverance are the traits. Throw in some artistic talent, the ability to be precise and a knack for working with people, and you have the makings of a successful cake decorator. Once established, there are opportunities to run your own business, teach amateurs and pros, write books or host your own TV show.

Gail Wilson and Bill Schneider are co-owners of The Cake Shop of San Jose in Jacksonville, Florida. Wilson got interested in designing cakes watching her mother bake for family and friends. After attending culinary school, she worked in a restaurant before opening the bakery. In addition to working in the shop, she teaches beginning cake decorating at Florida State College at Jacksonville. For Schneider, cake decorating was a second career and a natural extension of his talents as a floral designer. He briefly decorated cakes at a supermarket before joining Wilson as a partner. He’s known for lifelike gum paste creations that often are mistaken for flowers.
Karen Portaleo earned a mention on “The Today Show” website for her cake bust of actress Maggie Smith portraying Violet Crawley, Dowager Countess of Grantham, in PBS’s “Downton Abbey.” Portaleo teaches classes for novices and pros throughout the world.

Kerry Vincent, who got into cake decorating “by accident, as a favor to a friend,” is the author of *Romantic Wedding Cakes*, (Merehurst Ltd., January 2002), a Food Network Challenge judge, host of the network’s “Save My Bakery” and cofounder/director of the Oklahoma State Sugar Art Show, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Now, she only creates cakes for TV and magazines.

There are numerous possibilities for talented cake artists; however, there are lessons to learn before realizing them.

Culinary schools provide cake-decorating courses that can pave the way to jobs with supermarkets, Dairy Queen venues, gourmet bakeries and caterers, as well as appearances on local TV or cable. A must-take course is baking. Unless a cake is being designed just for show, artistic beauty doesn’t mean much if the cake doesn’t taste good. Portaleo believes that culinary students going into cake decorating have an advantage over those who are self-taught. “They have learned how to bake. That gives them independence and freedom,” she says. She learned to bake on her own while working part time at Highland Bakery in Atlanta. The shop still uses her specifications to bake the layers she decorates, and when she’s traveling, she often bakes her own.

Once those perfect layers are made, it’s time to decorate them. Culinary arts programs often offer several courses that teach students to do just that. At Kendall College in Chicago, Erika Webb, CEPC, CHE, chef-instructor, teaches basic cake decorating, wedding cakes, gum paste and sugars and sugar confection classes. The Institute of Culinary Education in New York offers a 16-week program...
in techniques and art of professional cake decorating. Other schools offer variations of these classes.

Don’t stop there, Tressa Wiles urges. Wiles, who as a child loved baking but never realized she could make a career out of it, is the director of all things baked and fried at Bayou Bakery in Arlington, Virginia. She earned an associate degree in pastry/baking arts from Stratford University, Falls Church, Virginia. Wiles bakes and decorates wedding and other specialty cakes on the side. She recommends that students read books and magazines on cake decorating, go online to get ideas and learn techniques, and work or volunteer in a bakery that does wedding or other specialty cakes.

Vincent, who lived in several countries before moving to the United States, was among the first to promote cake designing as a true art form. She urges future cake designers to get out and see as much of the world as they can.

Art galleries, museums, jewelry and nature all provide inspiration for the cake artist.

That’s where it pays to have an active imagination, Wilson believes. “Everywhere you look, you should think, I can put that on a cake,” she says.

You don’t have to be an accomplished artist to be a successful cake decorator, but most successful cake decorators agree it’s good to have some art background or talent. Webb has an associate degree in culinary arts from Triton College, River Grove, Illinois, and a certificate in chocolate showpieces and candies from The French Pastry School, Chicago. She worked under pastry chef En Ming Hsu at the Ritz-Carlton Chicago, and also worked in other Chicago restaurants. She enhanced her knowledge of cake decorating and gum paste techniques at Le Royale Icing, a Chicago cake shop. She believes her students who have an art background or talent tend to pick up cake decorating tips for aspiring cake designers.

- Learn how to bake.
- Learn the basics of buttercream.
- Take classes in school and from individuals.
- Have a vision of what you want to be and do.
- Put your thumbprint on something unique to you.
- Look for inspiration everywhere.
- Mingle online or in person with other cake designers.
- The role of repetition is huge in this business. Practice, practice, practice.


Courtesy of Erika Webb.
who works mostly in buttercream to create centerpieces. She also makes wedding and specialty cakes. “I am an artist who sees food differently than others,” she says. “I see it as an art form.”

Wortman and other cake designers suggest that practice is the way to hone skills. “And don’t be cheap about it,” says Wortman, who demonstrated her skills at the 2014 ACF National Convention in Kansas City, Missouri. “Buy a 50-pound block of lard and work with it. Then move onto buttercream. Get a feel for different mediums.” She also notes that, like ice, buttercream, which she often works with frozen, melts. “You have to learn to work quickly.”

Portaleo agrees that aspiring cake decorators need to invest in the future and not be afraid to ruin things as they learn. She suggests that novices buy a bucket of fondant or chocolate and make things by rolling it over pots and pans to get the feel of it and get comfortable with it. Like many cake decorators, culinary students can learn a lot on their own.

In addition to needing the patience to practice and make mistakes, future cake designers need to have people skills. While some cake designers, because of their years in the business and reputation, have, like Vincent, the luxury of creating only what they want to create, most have customers with their own ideas. They include everyone from brides to corporate meeting planners.
When working directly with the public in a bakery, as do Wilson and Schneider, or on your own, like Wiles, you have to please customers. It is important to get a feel for what type of person the customer is and the nature of the event. In addition, it is important to be flexible and understanding. “It takes a certain kind of personality to interact with customers. When you do it successfully, you’ll have a customer for life,” Wilson says. “Most customers have an idea of what they want, but the designer needs to offer suggestions and advice.” Cake designers have to work with customers to help them make choices that suit their event and budget.

Some people will come in with a photograph of a cake they want reproduced. When that happened to Portaleo, she knew her job was to please the customer. However, she always tried to introduce special touches to make the project her own. When cake decorators reproduce someone else’s work, they need to be careful to give proper credit and not let online or print photos be deceptive. Ethics are as important in cake designing as in any other profession.

So is making money, and when it comes to decorating cakes, there is no norm. Supermarket and ice cream shop decorators are paid an hourly rate that depends on their experience, store and location. Location also plays a key role in the earnings of decorators in bakeries and those working on their own. Those in urban areas with an affluent population and larger corporate clients generally can get more for their work than those in smaller, rural areas. And, of course, experience pays off in dollars.

“You can make a living decorating cakes, and it’s better than it used to be,” Portaleo says. Food Network shows and other TV programs have introduced people to over-the-top sculpted and elaborately decorated cakes. “People realize they can have those things, but will have to pay for them. It’s a matter of educating people,” she says.

And, for the would-be cake designer, it’s a matter of knowing the difference between a hobby and a job. “Sometimes people lose their creativity and their drive when it is something they have to do every day,” Wiles says.

Suzanne Hall has been writing about chefs, restaurants, food and wine from her home in Soddy-Daisy, Tennessee, for more than 25 years.
Farm-to-plate pickling
Recipe by Justin Hoffman
Article by Danielle Rodriguez
Photography by Matt Ziegenhorn

Fresh-packed sweet pickling is a quick process to preserve vegetables or fruits with vinegar, salt, water, sugar and spices. This method can be completed in a day. It differs from traditional pickling recipes that use brine. Brining requires more time and more salt to aid in the fermentation process. Kosher dill pickles are an example of pickling with brine.

The fresh-packed sweet pickling method provides a sweet, tangy and crisp pickle. Different spices, herbs and flavored vinegars will create interesting flavor combinations. Pickled items can be used for relishes, condiments, garnishes and even desserts.

Curing cucumbers dates back to 2030 B.C. when the vegetable was brought from India to Tigris Valley, which is modern-day Iraq. Ancient sources have referred to the nutritional benefits of pickles and claimed that pickles were a beauty aid. Cleopatra declared that her good looks came from a diet of pickles. Since the Middle Ages, pickles have been a common condiment and snack in England. Pickles became popular in the U.S. during the late 1800s when Eastern European Jews immigrated to New York.

Today, many culinary students are exposed to urban farm agriculture through schools and local nonprofit organizations. It is essential for students to learn how to grow, harvest, cook and preserve food, not only for health reasons, but also for society’s well-being. Engaging students in processing food that they consume provides life skills for further development.

Before the pickling process begins, thoroughly wash food, workspace and equipment to remove any debris or contaminates. After all items are sanitized, prepare the food to pickle by adding sea salt or kosher salt and aromatics to start the fermentation process. Once this process has taken place and the vinegar mixture is added, the result is a pickle created from the vinegar’s acetic acid. The fresh-packed pickling process is not canning and is not intended to make the product shelf-stable at ambient temperatures. Store the pickles in the refrigerator until ready to serve.
**Step 1**
Gather and organize tools and ingredients to prepare pickles.

**Step 2**
Using a crinkle cutter, slice cucumbers into ¼-inch slices. With a chef's knife, slice onions, garlic and red peppers.

**Step 3**
Mix cucumbers, onions, garlic and red peppers in a large bowl. Evenly distribute salt over vegetable mixture; let sit for four hours. Rinse in cold water.

**Step 4**
In a large stainless-steel pot, add cider vinegar, sugar, mustard seed, celery seed, whole cloves and turmeric. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat.

**Step 5**
Transfer cucumber/onion mixture to sterile Mason jars; leave a 1-inch space at the top of the jar. Pour in hot vinegar mixture. Cool slightly.

**Step 6**
Place lids and screw tops on jars; hand tighten. Cool in refrigerator until ready to serve.

**Ingredients**
- 25 cucumbers, thin sliced
- 6 onions, thin sliced
- 2 red bell peppers, thin sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- ½ cup salt
- 3 cups cider vinegar
- 5 cups white sugar
- 2 t. mustard seed
- 1 ½ t. celery seed
- ½ t. whole cloves
- 1 T. ground turmeric

**Equipment**
- Cutting board
- Crinkle cutter
- Chef's knife
- Colander
- Measuring utensils
- Large mixing bowl
- 1-gallon saucepot
- Wooden or metal spoon
- Tongs for filling jars
- Mason jars or containers of choice for storage

**Helpful Hint**
To seal the Mason jars, place on a perforated hotel pan and place pan in a steamer for 10-15 minutes. Remove jars; let stand until room temperature and the “tops have popped sealed.”

Bread and butter pickles made from fresh-packed pickling.
Although I have a Laotian name, Vietnamese cuisine has been the main part of my diet growing up in the U.S. My father, who was born and raised in North Vietnam, did most of the cooking. I was born in Vientiane, Laos, and immigrated to Thailand with my family as a Vietnam War refugee. In October 1975, my mother, who was born in Laos, my father, three sisters, two brothers and I emigrated from Bangkok to the U.S.

As a 5-year-old Asian immigrant, I remember U.S. cuisine being unusual and not to my liking. I did not even care for butter or pizza. My first experience with pizza was bad. My father bought frozen pizza, thawed it out and served it to us without cooking it.

My parents made our new living environment similar to the one in Southeast Asia by providing us with their homeland cuisine. They acquired seeds for such fresh herbs from Laos and Vietnam as mint, purplish Thai basil, anise, which is like red perilla or shiso, green perilla, lemon grass, cilantro and more. Vietnamese use mint as a savory, rather than a sweet, component for dishes. My parents grew such Vietnamese vegetables as mustard...
cabbage, small round green eggplant, bitter melon, Chinese spinach, and phak bung (pronounced phak book), also known as a Thai vegetable.

My father pickled a variety of vegetables, including mustard greens (dua chua), a staple side dish. He would soak mustard greens in saltwater for a day before rinsing and putting in a jar. Then he would put aluminum foil on top and seal it with a tight lid. The mustard greens would ferment for two months. Once they were soured, he would slice the pickled greens and add cilantro, minced ginger, sliced green chili pepper (usually jalapeño) and fish sauce.

When we lived in Laos and Thailand, fresh meat was always available. We slaughtered our own livestock. The villagers occasionally slaughtered a cow or pig, and my father would cure or smoke the remaining meats to extend shelf life. When he lived in Vietnam, there was no refrigeration. He would slaughter and dress livestock or fish the same day, and he brought that practice with him to the U.S. While growing up in Sarasota, my brothers and I would net shrimp and other shellfish and go fishing almost every weekend. When we wanted beef, my father asked other Vietnamese or Laotian families living nearby to join in the purchase of a whole cow from a farm, and he would slaughter it. Pork was handled the same way. When my father made blood sausage, it was a celebratory occasion. He would have his friends over to enjoy a feast of blood sausage and pig innards.

Doi huyet is Vietnamese blood sausage. Because my father is in his early 90s, it has been a long time since I have had it. Local Vietnamese markets in Florida sell doi huyet, but it is not the same. My father used fresh pig’s blood and special ingredients. He would drain the blood from a fresh-slaughtered pig and cure it with lemon grass leaves. Before piping
the blood into the hog casing, he would add ground pork sauteed with kaffir lime leaves, fish sauce, cooked broken rice, chopped cilantro and a small amount of fine shrimp paste. After he piped the blood mixture into the hog casings, he hung the sausage for a few hours. He then poached the sausage in saltwater until done. When it was cold, he served it sliced and accompanied by fish sauce with fresh chilies and lime juice.

Pork dishes are prevalent in South Vietnam, but North Vietnam favors beef or water buffalo when it comes to pho. Pho is comfort food to me. My father and my older brother would go to a farm at 3 a.m. with two or three other families and slaughter a cow. Once we divided the slaughter, we would fabricate the beef to freeze it. The leftover parts were shanks and knucklebones. My parents would throw these in a giant stockpot on an outdoor fire pit. I would toast aromatic spices that included cinnamon bark, coriander seeds, star anise, cloves and nutmeg. The stockpot would simmer for hours with knucklebones, toasted spices, brulee onions, whole ginger, granulated sugar and fish sauce. My father’s pho is the best I have ever had, and it was a celebration every time we made it.

Another celebratory dish my father spent time preparing is banh chung. He would prepare this dish to celebrate Tet, the Vietnamese New Year, which is celebrated around February. Banh chung is a square-shaped sticky rice stuffed with pork belly and mung beans and simmered in water for 12 hours. I would help my father wrap it with banana leaves and tie it with bamboo string. This was an exciting time for me, because it was a chance to make a campfire and hang out with my brothers and father. My father would then visit...
While I was getting my degree, I would reflect on the food that I consumed growing up. The way my family and I acquired food was physical, from gardening and fishing to slaughtering livestock and cooking fresh food. After finishing my degree, I attended Southeastern Academy Culinary Training Center, Kissimmee, Florida, for classical culinary arts training. Almost every dish I prepared in culinary school was reminiscent of how my father and mother had flavored and cooked.

While working as a chef in Orlando, Florida, I interjected my Asian flavor profile into my creativity for menu development and daily specials. I am pleased that the Southeast Asian flavor profile has become a trend on the U.S. culinary scene, and I continue to expand and share my knowledge of Asian cuisine.

From Laos to Vietnam
There is a reason why my last name is Laotian and not Vietnamese. My father was a North Vietnamese general who defected when the U.S. entered the Vietnam War. He fled to Laos, where he met my mother, and turned himself in to the U.S. The CIA interrogated my father and released him six months later. He became a battalion commander in Vientiane, Laos, for the Laotian army during the Vietnam War. He changed his name to protect his family that remained in North Vietnam. In his new position, he assisted the CIA in interrogating captured North Vietnamese military personnel. My father kept this detail a secret for a long time, and only told me when I decided to serve in the U.S. Army in 1989. This explains why my Laotian friends had a different upbringing when it came to cuisine and culture.
Neal Brown
By Ethel Hammer

Chef Neal Brown has been pushing boundaries since his days as a mischievous boy. His first restaurant, L’Explorateur, touted his natural inclination to explore. L’Explorateur was far ahead of its time. It set a standard and led the way. The restaurant closed in 2009, but it is still a local legend for introducing such dishes as seared foie gras with peach ice cream, the kind of things Indianapolis had never tasted. “I’m proud of the restaurant’s legacy of expanding culinary boundaries,” he says.

Not one to sit on his hands when L’Explorateur closed, Brown jumped into pizza, a culinary mainstay. He opened his first craft pizza restaurant, Pizzology. No longer able to fashion himself as Indianapolis’ most inventive chef, he knew that crafted Neapolitan-style pizza could still fulfill one of his major objectives: to get people to eat more local food. The house-made porchetta, mortadella and pepperoni in his carne pizza are made from local pigs and the arugula comes from a local farm. Indianapolis’ narrow culinary tastes had previously stymied him. Now, as he grows an independent pizza empire, he can help develop younger chefs and thereby help build a bigger Indianapolis food scene. And his love of embracing large objectives didn’t stop there.

In 2012, he started The Brown Bag, a food delivery business inspired by the legendary Mumbai delivery system dabbawala, which is operated by 5,000
men who transport lunch to customers in silver lunch pails, or tiffins. The Brown Bag delivered lunch in returnable pails with such dishes as Thai chicken curry and carnitas tacos. The Brown Bag didn’t make it. Still, Neal Brown, the explorer, cut down on throwaway containers and expanded the palates of local residents, turning them into explorers, too. Now, with Juanita, a *taqueria* specializing in ceviche in the works, what other ideas might be simmering on his back burner?

Ask for his signature dishes at Libertine Liquor Bar, and Brown says, “Our menus are ever evolving, but to say we have signature dishes is misleading.” However, he admits that the bacon flight with lamb back, jowl bacon and Smoking Goose house bacon is widely requested, but not always on the menu. *Esquire* put Libertine Liquor Bar on its list of the best bars in American in 2013. If it has a signature drink, it’s the Screw & Bolt, an unexpected mixture of gin, neroli (oil from blossoms of the bitter orange tree), tonka bean (a South American spice similar to vanilla that has a fruity aroma), violet and grapefruit. “It’s an experimental drink that creates a challenge and is not like anything you’ve tasted,” Brown says. Experimental, challenging and moving in surprising directions—this is Neal Brown.
How has the food scene evolved since you did L’Explorateur?

NB: We are not a confident group of people when it comes to the culture of food. Taking risks is terrifying when you live in a conservative place. But the mindset has shifted here. I think there is a new generation of people whose interest in food is not conservative. Younger chefs are challenging older chefs, who are trying to be more adventurous, too. Now some people will only eat at independent restaurants. People no longer say, let’s go out to dinner and a movie. They want to go out to dine. The tag line at Libertine Liquor Bar is “Celebrating the Pioneering American Spirit.” L’Explorateur was the most inventive restaurant Indianapolis had ever seen. We were doing things in 2006 that chefs are doing now, using progressive cooking techniques such as sous vide, and using hydrocolloids to go beyond the mother sauces. We were not successful, but we were sustainable until the recession. I’m most proud that people still respect what we did and think it’s important. I do all this to make my community better and to get people to think in a more progressive way about food.

What happened when you decided to open a pizzeria?

NB: I had to develop leadership skills. I was no longer going to be this creative chef. It was difficult for a while. Then I started thinking that maybe my job is to train and give opportunities to young chefs and develop Indianapolis’ food.

Your best advice for chefs?

NB: Get an education, any education. While I loved going to Johnson & Wales, I no longer support culinary institutions because the student debt is too much. It takes years to pay down the debt, and young chefs will be making only $10 an hour when they get out of culinary school. So, I advise people to find a mentor they can get close to. Go to a hotel and cook for someone you admire, or take the independent path and work with someone who does food you want to cook. If you can’t have a long-term relationship with that person, find someone else. I was mentored by Tony Hanslits at Tavola di Tosa and Greg Hardesty at H20 Sushi Bar. They allowed me to get close to them and see how they did things.

One of my mentors is a Harvard-trained oncologist who started his own pharmaceutical company. Another is a retired aeronautics and automotive industry executive, whose advice has helped me navigate the world of startups. I really identified with Steve Jobs. He was independent and, more than anything else, had the ability to articulate an idea and trust he had done it well enough so that his group of aides could go off and work on it, after which he’d refine it. I’m proud that I have a point of view. I like to think about food in Indiana outside the normal conventions of noodles, steakhouses and chain restaurants.

Above: House-made mortadella with pistachios.
Opposite left: “Old Kentucky Rome” features Kentucky-cured prosciutto, roasted figs, arugula and taleggio cheese.
Opposite right: One of Pizzology’s rosa pizzas topped with fennel sausage. Photos courtesy of Neal Brown.
culture. My goal now is to allow as many people as possible to eat local food. I’m keeping my prices low. It’s tough trying to push boundaries if you want to keep your food inexpensive. But we have grilled octopus on the menu at Pizzology, and that’s pretty innovative for a pizzeria. We also have a ham tasting plate so people can experience five different hams, three local and two from outside Indiana.

Is Indianapolis a good place for new chefs?

NB: Over the past 10 years things have been slowly changing, thanks in part to the baby boomers who are traveling all over the world to New York, Chicago, Miami, Shanghai, China, Paris, and tasting new things. When they come back to Indianapolis they say, I wish we had some of those things here. Suddenly we have three vegetarian restaurants, several Chinese and Korean restaurants, plus Latin and Thai food. Ethnic restaurants are the unsung heroes in the culinary explosion of Indianapolis. The craft beer movement is blowing up. If our employees desire to go after sommelier certifications, we will pay for them.

Now younger chefs are starting to make names for themselves, and I think that will continue. Ultimately, I see Indianapolis in a ripe position. The center core of our city used to be stagnant. Downtown used to be a business center, and people would return to the ‘burbs after 5 p.m. Now people are starting to live in condos downtown, and they see Indianapolis as a perfectly good place to raise a family. A lot of people are coming to live here from out of state and the suburbs. In addition, Indianapolis is developing as a vibrant tech climate, and this means real opportunities for chefs.

Tell us a little more about your life now as Indianapolis keeps evolving.

NB: I’m an outgoing sort of introvert. I recharge my batteries by being alone. I do tons of reading, mostly cookbooks. I like biographies. And I run a little bit. I love the natural world. I’m a semi-environmentalist, because, frankly, I don’t have the time to dedicate to being an activist. I’m vocal about the preservation of species and ecology.

I think being a restaurateur and a chef is really a simple life. The impact we have on people is immediate. People eat food and know right away if they love it.

Ethel Hammer is a writer, lecturer and cartoonist based in Chicago.
Did you read all the articles in this issue?
Take the Sizzle Quiz to test your knowledge.

1. What are Slice of Life’s Paola Schwartz career plans?
   a. Executive chef
   b. Banquet chef
   c. Health-supportive chef
   d. Sous chef

2. The scallop shell is the emblem for which apostle?
   a. St. Paul
   b. St. James the Greater
   c. St. Thomas Aquinas
   d. St. Luke

3. What is the center-of-the-plate for the modern version of Coquilles St. Jacques au Gratin?
   a. Au gratin scallops
   b. Poached scallops
   c. Seafood sausage
   d. Sauteed scallops

4. Dinner Lab is a New Orleans-based organization that does what?
   a. Showcases emerging chefs by organizing pop-up events
   b. Conducts surveys for chefs on new menu items
   c. Provides consulting services to restaurants
   d. Provides public relations and marketing services to the hospitality industry

5. The term for a single or series of dining experiences held in a random space or existing restaurant in off hours?
   a. Fast-casual dining
   b. Adventure dining
   c. Field dining
   d. Pop-up

6. Success in cake decorating depends on what skills?
   a. Baking skills
   b. Art skills
   c. People skills
   d. All of the above

7. What is the professional development organization for cake decorators?
   a. Oklahoma State Sugar Art Show
   b. International Cake Exploration Société
   c. ACF National Convention
   d. Le Royale Icing

8. How does fresh-packed sweet pickling differ from brine pickling?
   a. Uses vinegar
   b. More time and more salt to ferment
   c. Less time and less salt to ferment
   d. Uses spices

9. Pickling dates back to which time period?
   a. 2030 B.C.
   b. 1800s
   c. Middle Ages
   d. 1920s

10. What city in Florida did Sisavath Keovilay grow up?
    a. Orlando
    b. Kissimmee
    c. Sarasota
    d. Gainesville

11. Vietnam’s Central region is influenced by what countries?
    a. France and Portugal
    b. China and Thailand
    c. Cambodia and Laos
    d. None of the above

12. What is a culinary advantage of using nontraditional fish?
    a. Customers recognize the names of bycatch
    b. There are no culinary advantages to using lesser-known seafood
    c. Chefs have to find similar substitutes for traditional seafood dishes
    d. Creating a new market for bycatch

13. What organization helped launch trash fish dinners in 2013?
    a. Monterey Bay Aquarium
    b. Chefs Collaborative
    c. Oceana
    d. The Seafood Watch

14. What was Neal Brown’s first restaurant in Indianapolis?
    a. Libertine Liquor Bar
    b. Pizzology
    c. L’Explorateur
    d. The Brown Bag

15. What was Neal Brown’s main objective for starting Pizzology?
    a. He loves pizza
    b. It was easy
    c. He was tired of inventive food
    d. He could use pizza as a way to get people to eat more local food
last bite

Indianapolis

Indy is set to make a statement in the culinary industry with its soon-to-launch food and beverage innovation hub, Tinker Flats. The intent is an incubator similar to what is available for tech startups that will encourage a next generation of artisan food businesses, restaurants and mixologists to celebrate farm-to-table and urban living in the “Circle City.” And Indy already has plenty of great places to eat. Just ask its chefs.

farm-to-table eats

The Local Eatery and Pub
14655 N. Gray Rd, Westfield
(317) 218-3786
localeateryandpub.com
@LocalEateryPub
Mon.-Thurs.: 11 a.m.-10 p.m.
Fri. & Sat.: 11 a.m.-TBD
Sun.: 11 a.m.-9 p.m.
$ Starters: $4-$10.75
Market specials: $7-$22
House favorites: $10-$23

This is some of the best comfort food in Indianapolis. With great weekly specials of frog legs and bison burgers, Chef Craig Baker and his staff surround themselves with local farmers and have a strong influence on the culinary scene. It has great atmosphere and great service.

–Steven Oakley, chef/proprietor, Oakleys Bistro

Szechwan Garden
3649 Lafayette Rd
(317) 328-2888
szechwanganonline.com
@Szechwan-Garden
Mon.-Thurs.: 11 a.m.-10:30 p.m.
Fri.-Sun.: 11 a.m.-11 p.m.
Dim sum hours: 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
$ Appetizers: $3.25-$10.95
Soup: $5.95-$13.95
Chef’s Recommendations: $10.95-market price

For dim sum, my favorite restaurant is Szechwan Garden. It’s a great way on a lazy Saturday or Sunday to try their different traditional dishes that are well executed.

–Chris Eley, owner, Smoking Goose

the neighborhood bistro

Oakleys Bistro
1464 W. 86th St
(317) 824-1231
oakleysbistro.com
@OakleysBistro
Lunch: Tues.-Sat.: 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Dinner: Tues.-Thurs.: 5-9:30 p.m.
Fri. & Sat.: 5-10 p.m.
$ Soups: $6.75
Salads: $9.75-$11.75
Entrees: $18.75-$32.75

This is my go-to restaurant in the city. I have much respect for what Steve Oakley is doing. The food is well thought out and executed admirably. Visiting and touring the menu makes for a great night out.

–Thomas Melvin, executive chef, Union 50

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