

CHEF SPIKE MENDELSON

Spike Mendelsohn was 13 years old when he had his first real experience in the kitchen, putting his feet to the fire by filling in for a missing sauté cook at the height of the evening rush in his parents' busy restaurant. His mom remembers that night vividly, insisting she instantly knew he was destined to be a great chef one day.



Over the years, Spike moved around the restaurants and filled in for every possible position from waiter to bartender to maitre d. He was hooked.

Spike was 19 years old when he told his mother he wanted to become a chef. Aware of his potential and understanding the level of commitment it takes to become a great chef, his mother made him a deal: work for one full year and live up to the demands of the chef; learn some humility and perseverance, and she and his father would send him to any culinary school anywhere in the world.

In January of 2004, Spike started his formal education at the Culinary Institute of America. For his externship he unrelentingly sought a position with Chef Gerard Boyer at the famous Restaurant Les Crayeres in Reims, France. He soaked in every ounce of knowledge that he could during that time and kept a journal about it documenting recipes and techniques in detail.

Upon his return to the Institute he joined the Culinary Society and eagerly participated with Chef Pardus and Chef Michael Huynh in a series of fusion dinners in the hope that he would be chosen as one of the 10 students that would be afforded the opportunity to go to Vietnam a culinary adventure with both Chef Pardus and Chef Huynh. He was chosen to go on that trip and it would be the beginning of the very unique and delicious Vietnamese influence on most of his cuisine.

Spike graduated on March 4, 2005 receiving the highest award offered at The Culinary Institute of America, The Francis Roth Leadership Award. He pursued and landed a job working for Thomas Keller at Bouchon Restaurant in Napa Valley.

Sleeping in his car on his way to California and living on the meager salary of a start up Chef, he took in whatever he could from that experience. He later moved to New York City to work for the Maccioni Family at the famed Le Cirque. After leaving Le Cirque Spike went to work for Drew Nieporent of the Myriad Restaurant Group and later Chef Michael Huynh to open Mai House in Tribeca.

Only a few months after Mai House opened, Frank Bruni of The New York Times awarded the restaurant two stars. In 2008, Mai House was listed as one of the ten best new restaurants by The New York Times, due in no small part to Chef Spike.

Chef Spike then took center stage when he was a contestant on "Top Chef Chicago," on the Bravo TV Network. Spike contends, "Becoming a 'Top Chef' cannot be accomplished on a reality show, because it takes a lifetime..." He is now widely known as one of the popular series biggest breakout stars.

Spike takes the kitchen by storm with the fuse of a true chef. He believes in knowing the basics but also in adding an exotic flair in his quest to be the very best. Most recently he



partnered with Kelsey Nixon, fan favorite chef and former “The Next Food Network Star” contestant, in an online on Food Network’s sister online channel Food2 that offers two takes on classic dishes – Kelsey’s “by the book” approach and Spike’s “off the hook” spin.



His latest endeavor has been his old-year-old restaurant, Good Stuff Eatery in Washington D.C., featuring his own personal weaknesses – handmade hamburgers, hand cut fries and handspun milkshakes in an environmentally friendly atmosphere. It’s been praised by the Washington Post as the “Best Burgers 2009” in D.C. and has been frequented by the first family on several occasions. He also took home three of the top honors at the coveted 2009 South Beach Wine & Food Festival’s “Burger Bash” for a popular Good Stuff Eatery burger “Colletti’s Smokehouse”

beating out veteran chefs Bobby Flay and Morimoto. The lines are continuous at the Capitol Hill hot spot.

Good Stuff Eatery will soon franchise in D.C. and other cities and fans of great food can also look for an Italian eatery from Spike and his family to open next to the original Good Stuff Eatery location in D.C. in the coming months.

Spike spends time off participating in cooking demonstrations, speaking venues around the country and can be seen on the Top Chef Tour Bus and on this season of “Top Chef Masters” where he makes a few cameos. He also participates in special events most recently with the culinary iconoclast Paul Liebrandt at the James Beard Foundation.

His first cookbook will come out in 2010.

On a more personal note, Spike will continue to pursue his professional dream which is to one day bring the very coveted Three Michelin Stars to his resume.

www.chefspike.com

www.goodstuffeatery.com

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