



LOUISIANA COOKIN' MAGAZINE'S
7TH ANNUAL
CHEFS TO WATCH
2008 AWARD WINNERS

Each year, Louisiana Cookin' scours the state for five of the best and brightest emerging chefs and recipes. We honor them in this issue and we honor them at a dinner that also raises money for Café Reconcile, a nonprofit organization that trains inner-city kids for a life in the restaurant business. For more information on the dinner and beneficiary, visit www.LouisianaCookin.com and www.CafeReconcile.com.

BY JULIE Y. BENSON

For at least 40 years, the Louisiana license plate has read "Sportsman's Paradise." But there are many other reasons besides the great outdoors to call Louisiana "Paradise," not the least of which is the importance we place on the pleasures of the table. Louisiana has a food culture unlike anywhere else on earth, and here, eating is an experience. This year, *Louisiana Cookin'* magazine's Chefs to Watch are so attuned to those pleasures that each of their restaurants has become a small food paradise. The passion these chefs bring to their tables has created a felicity that only the finest restaurants can attain. So it is with great pride and pleasure that we introduce our newest group of young chefs and the recipes that will make them famous:

Top from left: Chef Jude Tauzin, Chef Susan Zemanick, Chef Justin Devillier. Bottom from left: Chef David Bridges, Chef Spencer Minch.



THE RECIPES

FIRST COURSE

Sautéed Gulf Shrimp with Roasted Creole Tomatoes, Arugula & Preserved Lemon Vinaigrette

MAKES 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

Chef Spencer Minch of Emeril's Delmonico
Recipe courtesy Emeril Lagasse, Emeril's Food of Love Productions, 2008

- 2 large ripe Creole tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, in all salt, to taste
freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 pound Louisiana shrimp (21-25 count)
- 4 ounces arugula
Preserved Lemon Vinaigrette, for serving (recipe follows)
fresh soft herbs, for garnish, such as parsley, tarragon, or chives

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Slice the tomatoes; core and remove the seeds; dice, lightly coat with 1 tablespoon of olive oil, salt, and pepper, and roast in the oven for 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool until ready to assemble the salads.

Season the shrimp with salt and pepper. In a sauté pan, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil and, when hot, sauté the shrimp until just cooked through, 1 to 2 minutes on each side. Set aside. Toss the arugula and roasted tomatoes with enough of the vinaigrette to lightly coat. Divide the arugula and tomato mixture evenly between 4 or 6 salad plates, and top with the cooked shrimp. Drizzle a little vinaigrette over each shrimp and garnish with fresh herbs, if desired.

Preserved Lemon Vinaigrette

MAKES ABOUT 1 1/4 CUPS DRESSING

- 2 tablespoons Champagne vinegar
- 1 teaspoon minced preserved lemon
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh tarragon
- 1 teaspoon Louisiana honey
- 1/2 teaspoon minced shallot
- 1/8 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 cup canola or vegetable oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste



Combine the vinegar, preserved lemon, tarragon, honey, shallot, and mustard and whisk to combine.

While whisking, add the oil in a slow, steady stream until completely combined. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Chef's Note: Preserved lemons are a Moroccan condiment made by combining lemons and salt. Jars of preserved lemons are available for purchase online at www.kalustyans.com or in the specialty import sections of certain upscale gourmet markets.



PAIR WITH: Feudi di san Gregorio Falanghina



CHEF MINCH'S HORS D'OEUVRE

Tomato-Basil Bruschetta with Cappacolla and Balsamic Reduction



These featured recipes and the hors d'oeuvres will be served at our **Chefs to Watch Dinner. Don't miss it!**

For information and tickets go to www.LouisianaCookin.com/ctw.htm, or turn to page 41.



Blue Crab and Summer Vegetable Soup

MAKES 5 SERVINGS

Chef Justin Devillier of La Petite Grocery

Broth

- 1/2 pound blue crab bodies, rinsed and dried
- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 cup tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- 1 carrot, peeled and medium diced
- 2 large yellow onions, medium diced
- 2 celery stalks, medium diced
- 2 whole bay leaves
- 15 whole black peppercorns
- 1 ounce fresh thyme, tied with twine

Break up the crab bodies and set aside. Heat oil in a 12-quart stock pot. Once oil is nice and hot, add crab bodies one by one, being sure not to splash oil on your arms. Stir with a large spoon over high heat until all the water is cooked out of the crabs and they begin to turn dark red and/or golden in color. As bits of crab begin to stick to the bottom of the pot, scrape them off with your spoon: This is called “fond” and

adds lots of flavor. Once your crabs are dry and you have developed plenty of fond, add your tomatoes, carrots, onion, and celery. Stir to incorporate and cover with water 3 inches above the crabs and vegetables. Add herbs and spices. Bring to a boil and turn down to medium-low heat. Let simmer for 1 1/2 hours. Strain through a chinoise three times and chill. Hold under refrigeration until needed.

To complete

- 1 quart prepared crab broth from preceding recipe
- 3 ounces seasonal greens, chopped small
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup mirlitons, small dice
- 1/2 cup sweet red bell pepper, peeled and diced small
- 2 cups ripe heirloom tomatoes, concassé
- 1/2 pound Louisiana jumbo lump crabmeat, picked for shells
- salt, to taste
- white pepper, to taste
- extra-virgin olive oil, to taste
- 1/2 cup fresh herbs, picked and left whole

Heat broth to a simmer. In the pot with the broth, add the greens and let simmer about 5 minutes. Meanwhile in a medium sauté pan, heat 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil and sauté the mirlitons for 1 minute. Add red peppers and continue to sauté for 30 more seconds. In 5 soup bowls, divide the heirloom tomato, mirliton, red bell pepper, and jumbo crab. Season broth to taste with salt and white pepper. Pour over veggies in bowls and garnish with lots of fresh herbs and olive oil.

Chef's Notes: The key to this soup is the quality of the crab stock. Once you have a delicious stock, you can add all kinds of fresh vegetables from your summer garden.



PAIR WITH: Markham Sauvignon Blanc



**CHEF
DEVILLIER'S
HORS D'OEUVRE**
Country Style Meat Pies





Spinach Salad with Fried Oysters, Bacon-Blue Cheese Vinaigrette

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

Chef Susan Zemanick of Gautreau's

- 3 egg whites
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 20 each Louisiana oysters, shucked
- 1 pound baby spinach
- 1 head frisée lettuce, cleaned
- 8 pieces of bacon, cooked crispy and crumbled

For Vinaigrette

- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup blue cheese, in all
- 1/4 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 3/4 cup grapeseed oil
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 cup white wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup buttermilk
- 1 teaspoon chives, chopped
- 1 teaspoon parsley, chopped
- black pepper, to taste

In the bowl of a food processor, beat the egg, 1/4 cup of the blue cheese and Dijon. Slowly emulsify the oil into the egg mixture. When it begins to look creamy, add the lemon juice, vinegar, buttermilk, pepper, and herbs. Set aside.

Whip the egg whites in a bowl until foamy. Mix the cornmeal, flour, salt, and pepper. Dip the oysters

in the egg whites, then into the flour mixture. Deep fry in peanut or grapeseed oil at 375°F for about 1 minute or until crispy.

Toss the frisée and spinach with the vinaigrette. Top with the fried oysters, bacon, and remaining blue cheese.

 **PAIR WITH:** Graffigna Malbec Centenario



CHEF ZEMANICK'S HORS D'OEUVRE

Asparagus Quiche



Find the [hors d'oeuvres recipes](http://www.LouisianaCookin.com/starters.htm) at www.LouisianaCookin.com/starters.htm.



Canard et Conserve ("Duck in a Can")

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

Chef David Bridges of Bella Fresca

Duck Confit

- 4 duck legs
- 1 bunch fresh thyme
- 4 bay leaves
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 1/2 cup kosher salt
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- duck fat or canola oil to cover

Press the thyme, bay leaves, and garlic on the meat side of the duck leg. In a stainless steel bowl, mix together the salt, sugar, coriander, and cinnamon. Turn the leg over and liberally coat the skin of the legs with the salt mixture. Place the legs on a pan and cover the pan with some plastic wrap. Place the pan into the refrigerator for 2 days. Remove the legs from the pan and rinse the salt and herbs off the legs. Pat the legs dry and place in a pot, skin side down. Cover the legs with the duck fat and cook on lowest possible fire, allowing the legs to slowly simmer for 90 minutes. Cool legs in fat until ready to use.

Smothered Cabbage

- 4 strips bacon
- 1 yellow onion, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves
- 1 teaspoon ground juniper
- 1 head green cabbage, shredded
- 1/2 cup chicken stock
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

In a medium-size pot render the bacon on low heat until lightly browned. Add the onion and cook for 8 to 10 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add the thyme, juniper, cabbage, and chicken stock to the pot. Cover the pot and cook for 30 minutes or until the cabbage is tender. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Pepper Jelly Glaze

- 1 orange, juice and zest
- 2 ancho chiles, toasted, seeded, and ground
- 2 cups rice vinegar
- 1 quart light corn syrup
- 1/2 ounce powdered gelatin
- 1 red bell pepper, minced

In a medium pot, place the orange juice and zest, ground ancho, vinegar, and corn syrup on a medium flame and bring to a simmer. Bloom the gelatin by placing it in 2 tablespoons cold water, and add it to the pot. Stir until the gelatin is dissolved. Turn off the heat and add the red bell pepper. Place in a container and let cool.

The Cans


- 3 ounces sliced foie gras
- 1 cup Pepper Jelly Glaze, recipe above
- 4 10-ounce cans or mason jars
- meat and skin from 4 Duck Leg Confit, recipe above, left
- smothered cabbage, recipe bottom left

Season foie gras with salt and pepper. Sear the foie gras in a hot skillet until nicely browned on both sides. Set aside to cool.

Pour 2 ounces of pepper jelly into the bottom of a 10-ounce can or mason jar. Place the duck into the can and insert the foie gras into the middle of the duck meat. Top the can off with the cabbage and seal the

can or jar. Repeat steps until all cans or jars are filled. At this point the cans or jars can be held under refrigeration until needed.

To serve, place the sealed cans in a pot of boiling water for 20 minutes. If you are using jars they will need to be warmed up before putting in the boiling water. Allow the jars to warm to room temperature for about 20 minutes and then place them under warm to hot running water until they are warm to the touch before placing in the boiling water. Take the can out of the boiling water and let sit for 5 minutes. Open the can and with a flourish of dramatics, place the contents of the can on top of a large piece of toasted brioche that has been lathered with mashed sweet potatoes. Raise a glass to your health, hard work, and to me—cause boy do I need it.

 **PAIR WITH:** Brancott Reserve Pinot Noir



CHEF BRIDGES' HORS D'OEUVRE

Belle Encourse
Beggar's Purse





Chef Spencer Minch

What happens to boxed macaroni and cheese when you mix it with an ambitious young boy who watches Justin

Wilson on television? Magic.

Born and raised in Memphis, Tennessee, Spencer Minch learned his way around a kitchen at an early age. With a few cooking shows under his belt, he began to experiment to make processed food taste better.

Spencer got his first restaurant job at 15 where he worked the fryer, washed dishes, and bussed tables. It wasn't exactly inspiring, but the experience gave him a reference point that would come in very handy later on.

After high school, Spencer attended college, but ultimately returned to restaurant work. Even though his interest in cooking was growing, he felt uninspired, so at the age of 24, Spencer set his sights on culinary school and becoming a chef in the city of New Orleans.

He attended Johnson & Wales in Charleston, which gave him an invaluable background in classic technique. But it was learning to apply those techniques that made him quickly discover that the "why" is often more important than the "how."

Then, true to his plan, after graduation Spencer arrived in New Orleans, where he got a job in the kitchen of the Hyatt Regency. "It was like boot camp," he said, "but it made me a better chef."

The following 2 1/2 years Spencer worked at Mr. B's Bistro, but in 2002 he had the opportunity to join the kitchen staff at Delmonico's, where in May 2007 he became the chef de cuisine.

Sometimes just the mere thought of being one of Emeril's chefs stresses him out, but Spencer keeps moving forward and works very hard to keep the restaurant on top. "Those are big shoes to fill," he said.

"The ultimate challenge is to do New Orleans food without doing the same thing as anyone else."

"This is what I was born to do!" he said. "Besides, I can't sing, and I can't dance."



Chef Justin Devillier

What happens when a southern California beach kid starts to put great food above a great wave? A career is born.

Growing up in Dana Point, Justin Devillier spent most of his time surfing and fishing, until age 16 when he took a job in a restaurant. He loved being in the kitchen so much that when the owner promoted him to busboy, he quit.

After high school, Justin joined a production company and spent two years on the road, which helped develop his palate. "I had the best hamburger of my life in Valencia, Spain!" Justin said.

However, with his continued love of fishing and his quest to learn better ways to prepare fish, Justin finally settled on a career in cooking. His first job was at Ralph Brennan's in Disneyland before moving to a large hotel kitchen, where he worked everything from banquets to room service. "It was grueling work," said Justin, but he learned plenty from the experience.

With family in Opelousas, in 2003 Justin decided that New Orleans would be the perfect place to live, and Bacco would be the perfect place to work.

Amazed by the extensive New Orleans restaurant scene, he said, "One day, after I first got here, I was downtown and saw all of these people walking around in chef's pants. That was the moment I knew I had made the right decision."

He loved working part time at Bacco, but when he was offered a full-time position at Peristyle, he took it.

"Working at Peristyle for Chef Anne Kearney opened up a whole new vision

for what a restaurant could be," said Justin. "The most important thing that I came away with was a respect for the importance of single ingredients."

He would have stayed forever, but when Anne sold the restaurant, he followed her former sous chef, Anton Schulte, to La Petite Grocery, where he has now taken over the kitchen. Saying that classic techniques work for a reason, it's Justin's careful use of seasoning that allows him to bring each dish to its moment.



Chef Susan Zemanick

What happens when you teach a woman from the Poconos about fish? She moves.

It all began in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, when a young Susan Zemanick signed up to attend a Career Exploration Program at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. She immediately fell in love with the school, the area, and even more so with cooking, and from that moment on her fate was sealed.

After high school, she enrolled at the CIA and stayed for a fellowship in the Seafood/Fish Department. And when this Pennsylvanian finished her training, she set her sights in a whole new direction: south!

There was just something about New Orleans' mystique that seemed to be calling her name, so Susan came for a visit in July 2001 and three weeks later, with "Fish Fellowship" in hand, was on her way to a new life in the Crescent City.

Landing her first job at Commander's Palace, she eventually moved to the kitchen at Gautreau's, where she worked sauté for less than a year before becoming its sous chef. But her big break came with the departure of Gautreau's head chef.

The good news was that she was asked to take over the position. The bad news

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Chocolate Cabernet Torte with Caramel Ice Cream & Vanilla Tuile Cookie

Chef Jude Tauzin of Catahoula's

Vanilla Tuile Cookies

SERVINGS DEPEND ON USE OF TEMPLATES

- 1/2 cup of egg whites
- 1 cup plus 3 tablespoons of confectioner's sugar
- 2/3 cup of flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 5 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 325°F. Sift the sugar, salt, and flour together, set aside. In a medium bowl, beat egg whites to soft peaks and then add the sifted dry ingredients, followed by the melted butter and vanilla. Mixture should be completely lump free and smooth. Keeping the mixture cold will make it easier to work with. On a silpat-lined sheet pan lay down a template if you choose to use one. (I use a spoon template. Fill the inside with tuile batter, scraping away the excess with an offset spatula.)

Or spread the batter out on the sheet pan and bake for 8 minutes; remove from oven and let cool. If you don't use a template, the large cookie can be broken into serving-sized pieces after it cools. Reserve in an airtight container for later use.

Chocolate Cabernet Torte

MAKES 1 9-INCH CAKE

- 1 1/2 cups Cabernet Sauvignon
- 1/4 cup plus additional 3 tablespoons of sugar, in all
- 1 pound semi-sweet chocolate, chopped
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 6 large eggs
- your favorite caramel ice cream, for garnish
- dark cocoa powder, for garnish


Preheat oven to 325°F. Grease a 9-inch cake pan and line with parchment. In a small sauce pan, combine Cabernet with 3 tablespoons of sugar and bring to a simmer, until reduced to 3 tablespoons; let cool. Melt chocolate in a double boiler over low heat. Whip the cream to soft peaks and set aside in refrigerator. In a medium-sized mixing bowl combine eggs, remaining

sugar, and Cabernet syrup. Place about 1 inch of water in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer. Place the bowl containing the egg mixture over the saucepan, stirring constantly until mixture is warm (about 110°F).

Then using an electric mixer with whisk attachment, beat at medium/high speed, gradually increasing the speed to high until the egg mixture is pale, tripled in volume, and holds soft peaks.

Remove bowl from heat and gently fold in melted chocolate, then fold in the whipped cream. Pour mixture into cake pan and bake at 325°F for 40 minutes. When the torte is cool, remove it from the pan and cut into 12 wedge shapes.

To serve, place the wedges on serving plates and top with your favorite caramel ice cream, a tuile cookie, and a dusting of cocoa powder.

 **PAIR WITH:** Taylor 10-year Tawny Port



CHEF TAUZIN'S
HORS D'OEUVRE

Scallop & Tuna Tartare



was that it happened three months before Hurricane Katrina. After the storm, Susan returned to a severely damaged restaurant, but explained, “I wasn’t going to give up on that opportunity. This was a dream job, and I was willing to wait it out.” So for the next year she became a private chef while the restaurant underwent renovation.

Susan says that the unique cuisine of Louisiana is continually inspiring to her. With so many “seasons” (crawfish, oyster, Creole tomato, and Mardi Gras, to name a few), things are always exciting. “My food is very straightforward,” said Susan, “It’s clean, easily understood, and we always put a lot of love into every dish.”



Chef David Bridges

What happens when an 18-year-old shows up to work in a restaurant kitchen dressed to impress? He quickly learns that wearing penny loafers is a big mistake.

David Bridges grew up across the river from New Orleans in Gretna. Although no one in his family really cooked, the first time he was left home alone he found a Better Homes & Gardens Cookbook and decided to bake sugar cookies. The magic of taking basic ingredients and creating something wonderful was an epiphany of sorts, and 10-year-old Dave never looked back.

Inspired by a high school friend who prepared his own family’s dinner every night, Dave decided that after high school he would get a job in a restaurant kitchen.

When he answered an ad for Barreca’s in Metairie, he showed up for his interview wearing a coat and tie, and they loved him so much that they told him to come back that very night. Dave happily returned wearing his impressive shoes and then spent most of the night trying not to land on his rear end on the slippery kitchen floors.

After a year and a half, he enrolled at the New England Culinary Institute. His first internship was at Mike’s on the Avenue and his second at the Brass Parrot in St. Croix, where he became sous chef. But after Dave made a move to Criolla’s in Grayton Beach, Florida, his wife got into Louisiana State University Shreveport Medical School, so back to Louisiana he went.

After three years at Fertita’s, boredom set in, so he quit and just stayed home to paint the house. However, after three months of paint fumes, Dave longed for the aromas of an active kitchen and that was the beginning of Bella Fresca.

Last year, he bought out the owner and made the restaurant his own. Having a real appreciation for the many strong traditions of our state, Dave says that Shreveport offers the best blend of Louisiana and traditional Southern cuisine. “It’s the crossroad between gumbo and chicken fried steak!” he said. And with one foot in tradition and one in the modern, there is no place for shortcuts in Dave’s kitchen. “My whole life is food and everything I do is cuisine related,” he said.



Chef Jude Tauzin

What happens when a would-be radiologist from Southwest Louisiana changes his career path? He starts

cooking, of course. Jude Tauzin grew up in two kitchens. One was his mother’s and the other his grandmother’s. Although both of these ladies really cooked, Jude’s first interest was in radiology, so he enrolled in the technical program at LSU.

Dropping out after only one year, Jude began to think about the culinary field, so he got a job in the kitchen at the Oakbourne Country Club in Lafayette. Two years later, he was headed to Charleston for the program at Johnson & Wales.

Jude enjoyed every aspect of the program and was even asked to remain as a teaching assistant. But he declined the offer and ultimately returned to the Oakbourne Country Club to become executive chef.

After four additional years at the club, Jude became restless and moved from one position to another. His goal was to gain as many experiences as possible, so between being the executive chef of the Cajun Dome and a corporate chef for the Rockfish Grill in Dallas, he was able to build his knowledge base with each opportunity.

Then, in October 2006, Jude was hired to run the kitchen at Catahoula’s, and in January 2007, he took over the ownership of the Grand Coteau restaurant. “If I didn’t do this, I don’t know what else I would do,” said Jude. “I try to keep up with food industry trends so that I can continually make things feel new.”

Jude says that the food products of Louisiana are like no place else, and as the president of the Acadiana Chapter of the American Culinary Federation and past chair of the Acadian Culinary Classic, he is about as involved in the local industry as he can possibly be.

With a goal to stay true to his Louisiana roots, Jude said, “I think that Catahoula’s is the best restaurant between Houston and New Orleans, and as a destination restaurant, I have to keep my menu diverse enough to appeal to a broad customer base.”

You can channel these winning chefs’ cooking mojo and create a special paradise all on your own by preparing their recipes in your very own kitchen. When you share these pleasures of the table with your family and friends, you partake in Louisiana’s food culture, and for David, Justin, Spencer, Jude, and Susan, that is what cooking and living in Louisiana is all about! Bon appetite! ♣

Julie Y. Benson is a New Orleans native who believes that NOLA Kids Rising is going to be one beautiful sight!