

2022 COMPETING CHEFS

Chef Ryan Cashio

Cajun House & Catering, LLC
Laplace, LA

A native of Reserve, Louisiana, Chef Ryan Cashio is a passionate chef and a dedicated conservationist of Louisiana Seafood. Ryan developed a love for the culinary arts while cooking with his parents at the early age of seven. It was at this time he knew he wanted to be a chef. Ryan graduated at the top of his class in culinary school at Delgado. In 2002, he saw one of his dreams become reality with the opening of his own restaurant and catering company, The Cajun Grill & Catering, in Laplace. Destroyed by Hurricane Ida, Ryan began planning a new restaurant. He found a bigger, and better, location that tripled the size of the old restaurant. By December 2021, Ryan and his wife opened Cajun House & Catering, LLC. Ryan has taken his culinary talents to the next level with a home-cooking spin on traditional Cajun foods as he continues to create new dishes, which allows their guests to “Taste da South in ya Mouth.”



Chef Amanda Cusey

The Villa Harlequin
Lake Charles, LA

Amanda Cusey, Executive Chef at The Villa Harlequin in Lake Charles, began developing her passion for food while growing up in the southwest United States. Traveling extensively throughout the U.S. and Europe, Amanda received her Cordon Bleu training at the Tante' Marie Culinary Academy in Surrey, England. Working her way up through the ranks at several restaurants in England and Ireland, she cemented her love of Italian cuisine while working under the guidance of Kristan Burness and Brendan Ward at Fiorentina in Dublin where she ultimately earned the position of Head Chef. Prior to coming to Lake Charles, Amanda worked with Michelin Star chef Oliver Dunne as Head Chef at his Italian inspired pop up restaurant Eatily in Dublin's city center. Amanda is now embracing her home and bringing her twist on Italian cuisine to downtown Lake Charles at The Villa Harlequin Restaurant.





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Chef Russell Davis

Eliza Restaurant
Baton Rouge, LA

Chef Russell Davis's interest in food began early, surrounded by the traditional Southern Italian food of his mother's family and inspired by their respect for local, quality ingredients. Russell began his career under Ella Brennan at Commander's Palace in New Orleans, mastering every station from busboy to Kitchen Manager to Sommelier. He then became the Ralph Brennan Restaurant Group's Director of Operations, overseeing multiple restaurants, before he branched out on his own to open Saltwater Grill in the Riverbend neighborhood of New Orleans. In 2015, Russell and his wife Sally relocated to Baton Rouge to be closer to family. Together, they opened their first joint venture, Eliza Restaurant & Bar in 2016. Named after the couple's daughter, Eliza is a contemporary Creole restaurant serving Louisiana cuisine crafted with the freshest ingredients from the region's farmers and purveyors - all served with an abundance of genuine Southern hospitality. In 2018, the couple opened JED's Local, an authentic Louisiana po'boy shop, featuring local Gulf seafood and a laid back, welcoming atmosphere to match. Russell's greatest joy is in the training and cultivation of his restaurant staff. His knowledge, experience and enthusiasm for the hospitality industry is a gift he's always ready to share with new team members to prepare them for their next steps.



Eliza
RESTAURANT & BAR

Chef David Dickensauge

Tsunami Baton Rouge
Baton Rouge, LA

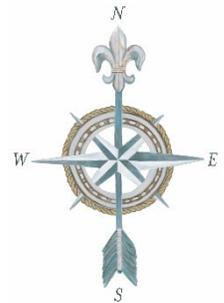
Over 27 years, Chef David Dickensauge has poured his life into the pursuit of culinary mastery and strives daily to share the culinary style he has learned on his journey. Beginning in New Orleans, he worked under James Beard Award-winner Jamie Shannon at Commander's Palace and at New Orleans' legendary Galatoire's. With Shannon's encouragement, he attended and graduated from the Culinary Institute of New Orleans in 1999. He then moved back home to help open the Beau Rivage Resort & Casino. Yearning for more experience, David worked in Birmingham, AL, at Hot and Hot Fish Club, Café Dupont, and Highlands Bar and Grill and Bottega Café. His next stops saw him gain culinary experience at highly acclaimed restaurants in Miami (Norman's), Chicago (Charlie Trotters), New York (Per Se and WD 50), and Philadelphia (Morimoto). In 2017, he again returned home to Mississippi to open Corks and Cleaver. That year, he was crowned Mississippi Seafood King. David has since moved back to Baton Rouge, and serves as the head chef for Tsunami Baton Rouge where he feels the most challenged with his deep love for Asian Food.



Chef Ben Fidelak

Mariner's Restaurant
Natchitoches, LA

Chef Ben Fidelak's passion for cooking started at an early age while working as a line cook in his father's restaurant in Northern Ontario, Canada. His skills were honed years later when he opened Maison Louisiane Catering in 2001 and then The Levee Restaurant in 2016 with his wife and business partner Keri. In 2018, Ben sailed from Cape Town, South Africa, to French Guyana traveling more than 5,800 nautical miles stopping at many countries along the way. Ben's culinary focus is to create signature dishes using inspiration from his travels while infusing a Southern Flair, true to the historic roots of Louisiana cuisine. Mariner's Restaurant is the culmination of 20 years of the Fidelak's adventures to over 40 unique and amazing countries. And, a few amazing stateside regions as well! Their dining, wine, and cocktail menus reflect the global influence of their travel with offerings from some of their favorite destinations such as Croatia, South Africa, Switzerland, France, Poland, Greece, Italy, Austria, and more.



Mariner's Restaurant
31.765537, -93.110247

Chef Ryan Gaudet

Spahr's Seafood
Des Allemands, LA

Born and raised in Thibodaux, Louisiana, Chef Ryan Gaudet started cooking at home at the age of 13. He embarked on his 26-year career as a dishwasher at Flanagan's in Thibodaux. Ryan continued working for other local restaurants around the Lafourche and Terrebonne bayous until he later graduated from the Chef John Folse Culinary Institute at Nicholls State University in 2005. Ryan apprenticed for several restaurants in the Chicago area, most notably Moto under the late Omar Cantu. He is the people's choice award winner for the 2015 Louisiana Restaurant Association's Bayou Chapter Culinary Showcase. Ryan is the Chief of Operations and Executive Chef for Spahr's Seafood, managing the operations of three Spahr's units located in Galliano, Thibodaux, and Des Allemands and also Malt and Burger, an old school drive in burger and shake joint in Thibodaux. When not at work, Ryan is fishing out of his kayak. He loves catching Louisiana seafood just as much as he loves cooking it.



Chef Kyle Hudson

Beausoleil Coastal Cuisine
Baton Rouge, LA

Executive Chef Kyle Hudson has always had a passion for cooking and the culinary arts. Even at a very young age, he gravitated towards the energy and experiences of the kitchen. Professionally trained in French technique, he loves to celebrate the local bounty of the Gulf Coast and all that Louisiana has to offer. Having the opportunity to train with a diverse group of James Beard Award winning chefs has inspired his cooking styles to have an influence from South America, Thailand, Switzerland, and England. Kyle has been with City Group Hospitality at Beausoleil since October of 2021, and they look forward to seeing him grow with their City Group Hospitality family of concepts.



Chef Karlos Knott

Bayou Teche Brewing & Cajun Saucer
Arnaudville, LA

Chef Karlos Knott learned the food traditions of south Louisiana by watching his mom Rose, his grandmother Emily, and all of his aunts cooking the mandatory-to-attend Sunday dinner at his grandparents' home. Etouffees, Gumbos, Jambalaya, Shrimp Creole, Fried Catfish – something was on the menu every week to entice the extended family to drive to the community of Bayou Portage to get together. Karlos enlisted in the Army as a Cavalry Scout and deployed to Germany for six years. He, his wife, and son traveled broadly while in Europe and were amazed by the locality of European cuisine and beverage. When he returned to south Louisiana, he and his family opened Bayou Teche Brewing in Arnaudville with a plan to create beers that pair with South Louisiana's cuisine, traditions, and lifestyle. The only problem was at that time a Louisiana brewery could not open a restaurant. After years of work and lobbying, in 2019 Louisiana allowed its breweries to add food to their menus. Karlos and his wife Stephanie opened the Cajun Saucer restaurant at the brewery. Focusing on Cajun-Inspired Italian fare, their wood-fired oven cooks pizzas featuring Cajun toppings. Continuing the childhood lessons learned at those mandatory Sunday dinners, on special occasions Karlos puts Louisiana seafood on the menu – his Neapolitan-style Crawfish Etouffee, or Seafood Gumbo pizzas (with a scoop of Louisiana rice in the middle) are customer favorites.



Chef Brett Monteleone

Junior's on Harrison
New Orleans, LA

Chef Brett Monteleone is a Louisiana native; born, raised, and still residing on the Northshore. He began working in the kitchen in 1999. With over 22 years of culinary experience, Brett has been the Executive Chef for Junior's on Harrison since March 2020 and in his current role as the Executive Chef for Hufft Marchand Hospitality since its conception in 2020. As the Executive Chef, Brett successfully oversees all back of the house operations for the entire company including four unique restaurant concepts, along with the group's two food trucks, all of which are located in Baton Rouge and New Orleans.



JUNIORS
— ON HARRISON —

Chef Amy Sins

Langlois
New Orleans, LA

A bland press kit bio cannot prepare you for the contagious joy, southern charm, and barefoot shenanigans of Chef Amy Sins. She's a mischievous host and fanatical food explorer in constant motion. Chasing down rogue chickens, spinning stories about Louisiana food traditions to eager diners, fishing for supper, traveling to far-off places, dreaming up dishes with Cajun and Creole flair – all part of Amy's unpredictable, almost unbelievable day-to-day adventures bouncing around South Louisiana (and the globe). Born and raised in nearby Gonzales, Louisiana (the Jambalaya Capital of the World and home of the best damn brown jambalaya around), Amy didn't follow the typical path of a New Orleans chef. No years in culinary school or humble kitchen stints at marquee restaurants. She was wired for cooking and entertaining as a kid, watching her parents' elaborate southern dinner parties unfold. After the event we will not name happened, Amy did some deep-down soul-searching that ended in walking away from a 20-year career in sales and bootstrapping her way into building Langlois from scratch in 2012 — first as an interactive dining/ open kitchen restaurant in the Marigny, and as the traveling culinary entertainment group it is today. Langlois is a tribute to her roots, combining Amy's pure love of dinner party style entertaining and Louisiana culture with authentic New Orleans culinary experiences.



Chef Joshua Spell

Fezzo's Seafood, Steakhouse & Oyster Bar
Crowley, LA

Chef Joshua Spell was born and raised in Crowley, Louisiana. At the age of 14, Joshua began his work in the restaurant industry at Chef Roy's in Crowley. In 1999, he started as Head Chef for Fezzo's Seafood, Steakhouse & Oyster Bar. Over the last 23 years, Joshua has helped Fezzo's grow into a multi-location operation, and recently took over the role of General Manager for the Crowley location. Joshua is a member of the American Culinary Federation, Louisiana Restaurant Association, and General Chairman of The International Rice Festival. Joshua's future plans include helping open a new Fezzo's Crowley location and serving his community for years to come.



Chef Grant Wallace

Dickie Brennan's Steakhouse
New Orleans, LA

For the past 6 years, Chef Grant Wallace has served as Executive Chef de Cuisine at Dickie Brennan's Steakhouse. He also oversees operations at The Commissary, Dickie Brennan & Co.'s 7,000 square foot production kitchen in the Lower Garden District. Prior to that, Grant was Executive Chef Morton's Steakhouse. He has worked with Chef Frank Brigsten at Brigsten's, Chef Donald Link at Herbsaint, and Chef Gerard Crozier at Chateaubriand. Grant is a graduate of the Chef John Folse Culinary Institute at Nicholls State University.

