

Craft Urban - BIO

Chef Bernard Laskowski, was born and raised on the South Side Chicago. He was first introduced to food through the ethnic community which he was raised in Brighton Park, small neighborhood delis and bakeries. He attended Quigley Seminary South College Preparatory High School which started his introduction to food service from all the time he spent in detention, they would ask for him to help with the morning rounds in the cafeteria. He would then join the United States Marine Corps after graduation and see the world experiencing different cultures. Upon leaving the Marine Corps, Laskowski was introduced to cooking as a security guard for the Mayfair Hotel. "Their job seemed fascinating, they exhibited the same characteristics I experienced in the Infantry. I immediately felt at home with the attention to detail, uniforms and regulations." Thus Laskowski began his professional career at the Le Ciel Bleu in the Mayfair Regent Hotel in Chicago, Where he learned the basics of classic French style from the ground up. He took his next job as a line cook to Lettuce Entertain You's Papagus Greek Taverna in Chicago under Chef's Jonathon Fox and Tom Culleeny. "It was my first big kitchen, we would do 1000 covers a meal period and make everything from scratch. Chef Fox and Culleeny never took the easy way in food production. They were the hardest working Craftsmen I had ever seen, they set the standard for me to follow." "The Marines taught me to always be the best, I wanted to become the best Chef you possibly could be, so I looked at the top restaurants in Chicago and the Everest Room was it, so the rest is history from there." From Papagus, Laskowski took a pastry position under Chef Jean Joho at The Everest Room in Chicago while studying the culinary arts at Evanston's Kendal College. "I had worked on the savory line for a few years and wanted to challenge myself with something new. A lot of cooks were afraid of pastries or showed no interest. " Chef Joho was raised in Europe after the WWII, in the home of Modern Cuisine. He stressed the importance of patience, practicing your trade and stressed the value of art." Laskowski then went to Europe and traveled through France, Switzerland and Italy where he learned artisanal food making techniques and the origins of our modern ingredients.

Laskowski returned to Chicago and went to work for Chef Michael Kornick at Marche' Restaurant on Randolph Street. Marche' paved the way in the New Casual Fine Dining Scene. Kornick's passion for food and wine influenced Laskowski. And further developed his desire to open his own restaurant. Laskowski worked with Kornick to open RedLight Asian Restaurant in 1996 where he served as Executive Sous Chef. In January 1997, Laskowski left RedLight to work with Chef Mark Baker as Senior Sous Chef at the Mobile 5 star 5 Diamond Hotel, The Four Seasons Chicago. Laskowski's tenure at The Four Seasons reintroduced him the world of Fine Dining, sourcing out the best of artisanal producers for Seasons Restaurant. "With the Everest Room I was a young apprentice eager to learn what was going on, now I was responsible for the creation of the guests experience start to finish on such a high level." After 3 years under Mark Baker, Laskowski felt it was time to tell his story.

In August 1999 was recruited to open the innovative Bin 36 Restaurant and Wine Bar in Chicago as Executive Chef. Bin 36 was a Modern Casual Fine Dining Restaurant, with a 100 seat Cellar Dining Room offering Modern American Fair with a Seasonally Changing Tasting Menu, plus 150 seat Casual Tavern. From the relationships Laskowski had fostered through his career, he was able to tap into sourcing out local and artisanal items to compliment Wine Director Brian Duncan's beverage selections. "We broke a lot of rules in regards to food and wine in my career, the chefs I worked under were always pushing the boundaries. Brian, helped

me connect the dots as a chef with wine and food.” I would have fresh morels delivered just picked the day before and Brian would always find a new pairing to share, we pushed each other everyday!”

In November 2003, Laskowski was again recruited to open another restaurant, the Park Grill in Millennium Park by Jim Horan. “I was given a tour of the empty pre construction park, I right away understood what this was going to be for Chicago and for myself. Jim Horan hired me because of my Chicago background but mainly because I was a Marine, he said the Marines always get it done”

Laskowski was able to design and create the Food Service platform used in the award winning park, the food service had to represent Chicago, the Midwestern Flavors but also hold up to the World Class Art Installations. Millennium Park would draw people from around the globe and needed to represent Chicago accordingly. The Park Grill, is the Modern American Eatery located under the recognizable “the Bean”. Serving Fine Casual American Fare sourced from Local Ranchers and Farmers. The Park Grill would draw culinary students from around the USA to work in the scratch kitchens. “I knew this was going to take a while, I wanted to build a kitchen that Chicago would be proud of. We had our own charcuterie program, dry aging coolers holding heritage breed beef and pork that we helped raise. We made our bread for the tables, a restaurant of this size had lots of easy solutions. I did not want to take the easy way out, we wanted to educate the chefs of the future.” The Park Grill would give Laskowski the opportunity to participate on the Planning Committee for the First Chicago Gourmet Food Festival, Illinois Heritage Festival and several other high profile Chicago Food Events. In June of 2011 Laskowski felt it was time to start out on his Own.

In June of August 2011, Laskowski started Cinderella Paleo Prepared Meal Company, a meal delivery service specializing in locally sourced foods, catering to a health conscious individuals. Cinderella Paleo became the Premiere Meal Delivery Company in the Fox Valley Area, servicing 1000 subscribers weekly. “I was able to introduce my passion for local craftsmen to a new audience, helping people not be afraid of food, helping educate their children and teaching them how to eat.”