

David Deshaies: Another Great DC Immigrant Chef

For a chef / restaurateur with a classical culinary pedigree, David Deshaies has made some very unique contributions to the DC restaurant scene. This spring, he's poised to introduce his latest offering — the Unconventional Diner in the DC Convention Center in Mt. Vernon square.

The Unconventional Diner, says Deshaies, was inspired by the “greasy spoons” that he and his mentor Michel Richard visited while traveling around the US during the heyday of Richard's culinary empire. Deshaies served as corporate chef for Richard's restaurant group during that period. The two chefs traveled around the country together — and would often end up in a local diner, late in the evening. On one of these evenings, Richard suggested that Deshaies open up a “hip” diner in DC; Deshaies didn't pay much attention at the time but years later the idea came back to him, and the Unconventional Diner was conceived.

The concept for the new restaurant includes a 50 seat daytime café/baker with counter service, and a 110 seat nighttime full-service restaurant and bar. The restaurant will offer a different approach to diner food with fresh and local ingredients; says Deshaies, “everything will have something you don't expect.”

Deshaies is proud to follow in the footsteps of the great immigrant chefs who have nurtured and grown DC's food scene — in addition to Michel Richard these include Jose Andres, Roberto Donna and Fabio Trabocchi.

A native of France's Loire Valley, France, Deshaies comes from a family of restaurateurs and chefs. His uncle, a charcutier/traiteur (basically, a high-end caterer)



was an important early influence. Deshaies learned about food preparation by helping his uncle make specialties such as rillettes, pate, and sausage every summer when he was a teenager. More importantly to his professional development,

Deshaies remembers the glamorous events his uncle catered — the music, the dancing, the champagne, the ambiance. He recalls his uncle coming out in his white chef jacket, greeting the guests, receiving compliments — basically, being the star of the show.

All this made a great impression on the young Deshaies and steered him toward a career in the food world. After spending a ski season at a four star hotel in Courchevel, Deshaies traveled to Mallorca, a beach resort in Spain, where he worked at a 1* Michelin restaurant — gaining solid knowledge of cooking fish and seafood.

The next stop was the 3* Michelin La Cote St. Jacques in Burgundy, where he trained under world-renowned chef Jean Michel Lorain for two years (and met fellow DC chef Cedric Maupillier).

A desire to learn English and to continue his professional journey led Deshaies to Washington DC and to Michel Richard. After 18 months on a J1 trainee visa, Deshaies was sponsored for a professional worker visa and at the ripe age of 23 he became the Sous Chef (and then, a year later, Executive Chef) of Richard's flagship Georgetown restaurant Citronelle. After more than a decade working at Citronelle and traveling the US as Richard's corporate chef, Deshaies returned in 2013 to Richard's Central restaurant in Penn Quarter, where he took up the role of General Manager to round out his restaurant expertise.

2017 promises to be an exciting year in Washington in many ways, and the opening of the Unconventional Diner will certainly be one of the highlights!

BECKI L. YOUNG, co-founder of Hammond Young Immigration, is a business immigration attorney with 20 years of experi-

ence in the field. She has represented more than 100 of the world's most prominent hotels and restaurants, and facilitated the sponsorship of foreign professionals, trainees, interns and individuals of “extraordinary ability.” Ms. Young is an active member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. She can be reached at 301-917-6900 or byoung@hyimmigration.com.



AT YOUR SERVICE SINCE 1927

Does your kitchen equipment need an immediate repair? Or ongoing planned maintenance?

For 90 years EMR has provided its customers with quality service and installation on their cooking and refrigeration equipment as well as their hood systems. Whether you need pro-active or emergency service, we'll keep your kitchen equipment running so you can keep your business running and your customers happy.

Visit us at the OCHMRA Show!
Booth #627

 WWW.EMR.CO.COM

EMR - your partner in commercial kitchen equipment service, parts, repair and installation. Now servicing Tidewater, VA!