



THE
FRENCH PASTRY
SCHOOL
City Colleges of Chicago

Chef Joshua Johnson

Pastry Chef Instructor

“I’m excited to see my students improve their technique, to see what they can learn from me, and I’m equally excited to realize all that I can learn from them.”



Joshua Johnson began working in pastry as a teenager in his uncle, Richard Rivera’s pastry shop, Ambrosia Euro-American Pâtisserie in Barrington, Illinois, about forty miles outside of Chicago. For six years, Johnson and his twin brother worked at Ambrosia under their uncle’s mentorship, beginning as part-time pastry cooks working on weekends and during holidays. Chef Richard Rivera’s accomplishments, in addition to owning and operating Ambrosia, include having worked as the Executive Pastry Chef at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Chicago for four years.

Upon graduating from high school, Johnson worked for two more years at Ambrosia with his uncle, Chef Rivera progressing from pâte à choux and mini pastries to the more complex French entremets, cakes and tarts.

Ready for a new challenge, Johnson’s next position was at The Ritz-Carlton Chicago Hotel where he received the invaluable guidance from Chef Sébastien Canonne, M.O.F., co-founder of and dean at The French Pastry School, as well as Chef En-Ming Hsu, Pastry World Champion, also an instructor at The French Pastry School. During this time, Johnson was invited to take a continuing education class from Canonne along with his business partner, Chef Jacquy Pfeiffer at The French Pastry School. In addition to the education and hands-on training, Johnson received inspiration for his subsequent pastry endeavor when he moved to New York. Johnson worked at Payard’s Pâtisserie & Bistro, being placed in charge of the tarts. After three months in a very challenging kitchen, he was promoted to the cake station. The volume of products the pastry shop produced on a daily basis was incomparable to any shop Johnson had seen. Two months ahead of time, they had finished about 10,000 cakes ready for the winter holiday season, while continuing to create hundreds of additional cakes daily.

After one year in New York, Johnson returned to the mid-west after his challenging and rewarding time at Payard’s and took a position at another award-winning, renowned establishment, Everest, in downtown Chicago, Illinois as the Executive Pastry Chef. After a year in this position in charge of all the pastry production for this luxury dining room, creating banquet desserts and plating for dinner service, Johnson returned to his pastry roots and rejoined Ambrosia Euro-American Pâtisserie, this time responsible for the creation of specialized pastries and baked goods as well as the development of new items. During this two-year period, Johnson had the opportunity to work once again for his former mentor, Sébastien Canonne, who was preparing for the most prestigious title bestowed on any French craftsman, the Meilleur Ouvrier de France.

In 2003, Johnson traveled to France with Canonne as his personal assistant, helping him in his preparation to compete in the arduous competition. Johnson describes the challenging job as the most amazing experience of his life, especially when Chef Canonne’s name was announced as one of the recipients for the 2004 M.O.F. title.

Soon afterwards, Johnson’s next venture lead him to co-founding and co-owning Cocoa Bean Fine Desserts in Geneva, Illinois where, as the head pastry chef, he managed a team of ten.

Joshua Johnson is thrilled with his present undertaking, rejoining Chefs Sébastien Canonne, Jacquy Pfeiffer, En-Ming Hsu, and the whole team of stellar chefs as a fellow pastry instructor. Johnson’s students benefit greatly from his experience, his own limitless curiosity, passion for the craft, superior knowledge, and devotion to the never-ending art of pastry.