



THE
FRENCH PASTRY
SCHOOL

Chef Bob Hartwig

Pastry Chef / Instructor



“The art of pastry arouses the senses. The sight, smell, sound, feel and flavor of pastry inspire and reward me every time I craft a dessert. As diligent as I am at teaching the science of pastry, it is my passion for the art that creates the artisan of the future. It is seeing that same passion within my students’ creations that brings me full circle.”

In October 2005, The French Pastry School proudly welcomed Bob Hartwig as Chef Instructor. A rising star in the pastry arts, Hartwig joined the school from the Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile, where he served as Senior Pastry Chef.

Hartwig’s love of the pastry arts began while a student at the Culinary School of Kendall College, where upon baking his first croissant he knew he wanted to pursue a career in the field. He not only developed a love of pastry while studying, he also excelled in the kitchen – winning several awards and graduating at the top of his class.

Upon graduation in 1997, Hartwig joined the kitchen staff at Rhapsody in Chicago, producing and plating upscale desserts for up to 300 customers daily. It was at Rhapsody where Hartwig first met The French Pastry School founders Sebastien Canonne, M.O.F. and Jacquy Pfeiffer, who were serving as consultants for the new restaurant. Hartwig would collaborate with Canonne and Pfeiffer several times in the following years, and the two would serve as mentors to Hartwig throughout his career.

After working at Rhapsody, and subsequently Mango, in Chicago, Hartwig joined the Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile as Assistant Pastry Chef. Two years later, he joined the Four Seasons Chicago in the same capacity before returning to the Marriott as Senior Pastry Chef. During his tenure at the Marriott, Hartwig successfully took on a dual role, leading pastry production for more than 7,000 customers each week while also serving as mentor and teacher to his nine-person team.

During a pastry competition in 2000, Hartwig crossed paths with Canonne and Pfeiffer and later wrote in his journal: “I hope to one day work with Jacquy and Sebastien.” Five years later, he was elated to join the two as a Chef Instructor at the school.

Chef Hartwig applied Canonne and Pfeiffer’s artist-apprenticeship model in his own kitchens. He has been called passionate and a student of the art, and he is honored to be able to bring that passion to The French Pastry School. He considers himself a constant student and looks forward to learning as much from his students as they do from him.

Hartwig is the recipient of numerous awards, including the award of excellence from the 2005 Illinois Hotel Lodging Association, and first place in the Plated Desserts Competition at the 1999 Confectioner’s Magazine Candy Expo.



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Chef John Kraus

Pastry Chef / Instructor



“My passion for pastry was passed down from the people who taught me; now it’s my job to pass that passion on to our students. When you understand the fundamentals, you can use that discipline to create extraordinary pastry.”

In August 2002, The French Pastry School proudly welcomed John Kraus as Chef Instructor. A rising star at an early age, Kraus trained as a chef and began his career in London, England, at the Dorchester Hotel. In the kitchen there, he worked with the boulangers and became captivated by the ritual of afternoon tea and the beautiful and intricate pastry he saw each day. Still convinced he should be versatile in the kitchen, Kraus was next hired for general duties by Chef Michel Perraud, Meilleur Ouvrier de Grande Bretagne, and contributed to the opening of the Michelin star restaurant, Fleur de Sel. He continued to assist the pastry chef there in an unofficial capacity.

Upon his return to the U.S., Chef Kraus worked in pastry with Chef Robert Waggoner at the famed five-star, five-diamond Wild Boar restaurant in Nashville, Tennessee. He was then appointed Executive Pastry Chef at the exclusive Magnolia restaurant under Chef Emile Labrousse. He is best known in Chicago for the innovative desserts he created while serving as Pastry Chef at NoMI restaurant in the Park Hyatt Hotel Chicago. “John has a beautiful sense of the classic, with a modern twist,” says Executive Chef Sandro Gamba of the Park Hyatt. “I love his pastry and he always knows what will please the customer.”

After Kraus attended an intensive workshop with Sebastien Canonne, he and Pfeiffer saw in Kraus a unique combination of discipline and innovation that matched perfectly the mission of the school. Kraus’s depth of understanding about ingredients and equipment was rare and reflected their own standards.

In 1999, Chef Kraus was invited to join The French Pastry School in Chicago as an assistant. Over the last several years he has worked diligently with his mentors, Chef Jacquy Pfeiffer and Chef Sebastien Canonne, participating in major competitions and special events across the U.S. and France.

Kraus’s recent awards include the prestigious 2002 Patis France Pastry Chef of the Year and the National Dessert Champion of 2002. He has completed numerous stages under Pastry Chef Pascal Caffet in Troyes, France, at Le Palais du Chocolat.

At the 2004 Food Network’s Chocolate Challenge in Atlantic City, New Jersey, Chef John Kraus was declared the winner with his sculpture titled “Love Takes Flight”. His dramatic chocolate sculpture showcased his unique artistic skills and demonstrated a sound knowledge of chocolate.

In 2005 Chef Kraus was named one of the Top Ten Pastry Chefs in the United States by *Pastry Art & Design* magazine.

Kraus’s fascination with pastry covers a range from viennoiserie to chocolate to candies and confections. Once called a romantic teacher by a former student because of his obvious love for what he does, Kraus is known at The French Pastry School as a generous teacher who makes his lessons applicable to his students’ futures in commercial kitchens or their own businesses. He takes his students to new levels by creating an environment where they are free to take chances.

Chef John Kraus’s passion and vision for the art of pastry has become a great asset to The French Pastry School and its students.

Known for his discipline in the craft and his devotion to passing his knowledge onto his students, Kraus was again named one of the Top Ten Pastry Chefs in the United States by *Pastry Art & Design Magazine* in 2006.



THE
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Chef Laura Ragano

Pastry Chef / Instructor

“There is nothing more exciting and motivating to me in teaching than seeing a student produce something under my direction that they take great pride and joy in having created.”



When Pastry Chef Laura Ragano enrolled at The French Pastry School at City Colleges of Chicago to sharpen her skills in the pastry arts, she never predicted she would one day teach alongside Chefs Jacquy Pfeiffer and Sebastien Canonne, MOF, the same chefs who mentored and inspired her as a student. But upon graduation in 2003, the star student would find herself in that exact role after accepting a rare invitation to join the school. Since, Ragano has made a name for herself as a talented baker, artist and mentor.

Promoted to Chef Instructor in January 2005, Ragano leads the school's wedding cake and gum paste class during the L'Art de la Pâtisserie program. Having received training from internationally-acclaimed pastry artists Nicholas Lodge and Kerry Vincent, Ragano teaches the delicate art with a discriminating attention to detail. In addition, she oversees many aspects of the school's operations, including curriculum development, kitchen management and intern coordination.

Ragano's love of cooking began at a young age. While growing up in Rockford, Illinois, she spent many weekend days in the kitchen preparing gourmet meals with her father. Later, after graduating from the University of Michigan, Ragano experienced work in a commercial kitchen at Café Patou, a French bistro in her hometown. Her experience at Café Patou, rotating through every facet of the restaurant, solidified her desire to work in the culinary industry.

That pursuit led Ragano to the Culinary Institute of America, where after graduating at the top of her class, she decided to focus on the pastry arts. After spending two and a half years at Bin 36 in Chicago as pastry sous chef and looking to broaden her pastry skills, she enrolled in The French Pastry School's L'Art de la Pâtisserie program.

Known by her students for having a calm demeanor, Ragano inspires her students with her attention to detail, her love of the art, and her team-focused attitude. And as a woman in a traditionally male-dominated industry, she is proud to be a mentor for the many women in the program looking to establish themselves in the field of pastry arts.



Chef Sebastien Thieffine

Pastry Chef / Instructor



*“I am as passionate in the process as I am in the result,
‘only with the very best can you achieve the very best.’”*

The French Pastry School at City Colleges of Chicago proudly welcomed Chef Instructor Sebastien Thieffine in April 2006. Most recently, Thieffine was the Executive Pastry Chef at the acclaimed Ritz-Carlton Palm Beach, where he prepared his signature creations for noted dignitaries and entertainers while directing an 11-chef team.

Surrounded by pastry most of his life, it was almost inevitable that Thieffine would become an accomplished pastry chef. During his childhood in Reims, France, he spent long hours in the kitchen with his grandfather, a baker. At the young age of 15, his career began with an apprenticeship in the pastry kitchens of Soissons and Reims. His studies there, which focused on both the technical and artistic aspects of the pastry arts, solidified his love for the craft.

After earning his Brevet de Maîtrise, specializing in pastry arts, chocolate and ice cream, he joined Restaurant Marius in Paris, training with Chef Jean Pierre Vigato at the Michelin two-star restaurant Apicius and Chef Gerard Faucher at the acclaimed Faucher. At only 23, he left France to work for the Le Méridien Hotel in Boston, where he spent more than two years as an assistant pastry chef before joining the Ritz-Carlton, Philadelphia.

His tenure with the Ritz-Carlton lasted for eight years, with appointments in Philadelphia, Kapalua, Maui and Palm Beach. During this time, Thieffine prepared his unique desserts for numerous hotel openings and national events, gaining notoriety for his intricate, flavorful creations.

The French Pastry School owners, Chefs Jacquy Pfeiffer and Sebastien Canonne, MOF, first met Thieffine during the 2002 World Pastry Forum. In Thieffine, they immediately recognized a drive and curiosity much like their own, and continued to mentor the younger chef over the next few years. The chefs eventually became colleagues when they invited Thieffine to join the school as Chef Instructor in 2006.

Devoted to the pastry arts, Thieffine is thrilled to bring his passion to his students. He is known as curious and dedicated, always looking for ways to challenge the status quo, and is looking forward to sharing his knowledge with his students while, at the same time, learning from them.

Thieffine has appeared in numerous local and national publications and also on The Food Network’s “Follow that Food.” In 2001, he first participated in the National Pastry Team Championship, and went on to win a bronze medal and the best pastry dégustation at the 2004 National Bread & Pastry Team Championship.