



Michael LaValle, Manager and Culinary Director, The Des Moines Embassy Club

Michael LaValle can't remember a time when he wasn't in the hospitality industry. From the time he could walk, he was helping in Rocky's Pizza Restaurant, the Ames pizzeria his parents operated for nearly 40 years. Michael studied and grew to be a lover of fine cuisine. He served in nearly every capacity in various fine dining establishments in the area – from chef to Maitre d'. He joined the Des Moines Embassy Club as General Manager and Culinary Director in 1993 and has traveled the world looking for interesting wines and dishes to bring back to the Des Moines community. He is also extremely involved in downtown and metro development and has been an active member of the Iowa Sister States Veneto Committee, Bailli Chaine de Rotisseurs, Des Moines Winefest, and other organizations.

Michael has always celebrated the history, community and beautiful views of the DMEC. You will often catch him working in a quiet corner in the Club, just taking it all in. He is a huge fan of the Club's special events and has almost never missed a special wine tasting dinner, Club-hosted guest artist performance, or annual family event. When Michael isn't at the Club, he is enjoying time with his wife Lisa, who is also a chef, and their three beautiful daughters or captaining his old-fashioned steamboat that is now a fixture on the Des Moines River.

