



Michael LaValle

GM and Culinary Director

The Des Moines Embassy Club

Michael LaValle can't remember a time when he wasn't in the hospitality industry. From childhood he was "helping" in his parents Rocky's Pizza Restaurants of 40 proud years and trying out Candy recipes on his little brothers. While working his way almost through college, Michael took a night job at the Embassy Club in the Hotel Ft. Des Moines in 1974 allowing him to study and grow to be a lover of fine cuisine. Michael has had various fine dining establishments – from Owner Chef to Maitre d', at Healthworks, LaVal's at 112 5th St., Eat Your Heart Out Gourmet Shop, City Grille & Deli, South Union Bakery, LaVal Ltd. Catering and now the Jon Anderson White Riverboat to name a few. 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 involved in downtown and metro development with ownership interests in Centro restaurant and MLK Gateway Market. Michael's talented Chef wife Lisa has run the Des Moines Art Center Cafe for 17 years and does nearly all the cooking at home, which really saves time on the kitchen clean up!

Michael believes all Chefs speak the same language and enjoys his close relationship with L'Association de la Loire Maitre Cuisiniers in France and Sister States Veneto, Italy Chefs. Michael serves as Bailli of the 31 year Des Moines Chaine de Rotisseurs and on the board of Des Moines Winefest and Veneto Sister States.

When Michael isn't at the Club he is enjoying time with his wife Lisa and their three beautiful daughters, gardening, fishing, hunting or working on his old-fashioned Paddle wheeler that is now a fixture leading the return to the Des Moines Riverfront.



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