

DARYL GASSMANN
CHOPS LOBSTER BAR EXECUTIVE CHEF

Daryl Gassmann grew up in rural Frederick, Maryland. His years on a farm had a tremendous influence on his decision to become a chef. Since there was an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables, Daryl learned the technique of preserving foods at an early age. After years of cooking experience and working in the restaurant industry, Daryl decided to make it a career and pursue becoming a chef.

In 1990, at the age of 19, Daryl decided to make his home in Atlanta. He contacted Pano's & Paul's, a flagship of the Buckhead Life Restaurant Group, believing that a position in such a well-renowned restaurant would set him on the right path. After impressing them with his knowledge and work ethic, he was set on a culinary course throughout the company – a key learning advantage to working within a diverse independent, multi-unit company. He learned techniques and styles at Pano's & Paul's, Atlanta Fish Market, Buckhead Diner, and was on the opening teams at Pricci and Veni Vidi Vici.

Within two years of being at Veni Vidi Vici, Daryl was promoted to sous chef and then to Executive Chef in 2001. He was given the blessings of legendary restaurateur Pano Karatassos (owner and founder of the Buckhead Life Restaurant Group) to raise the level of cooking from a trattoria approach to a more authentic, upscale Italian dining room, and he succeeded beyond expectation. His constant desire to improve upon an already exceptional dining experience is what made Chef Daryl a success at Veni Vidi Vici, and this drive has made him the perfect fit for the Executive Chef position at Chops Lobster Bar since 2006.

While Chef Daryl's primary focus has been on Italian cuisine in the past, he is excited and intrigued by the challenge presented to him at Chops Lobster

Bar. In a way, he says, making the move to American cuisine is a culinary sigh of relief. Though his love of Italian is still strong, he is no longer the American competing against the top Italian chefs in the industry. Having a strong foot to stand on, Chef Daryl is approaching American cuisine with a desire to learn what has been established at Chops Lobster Bar and execute it properly. “This is an exciting time to jump both feet forward into American food,” says Gassman. “It is just starting to establish itself as a cuisine worth recognition on its own.”

Chef Daryl’s specialty is cooking meals from Northern Italy – and this is not lost in American cuisine. Bringing a European philosophy of the culinary arts to Chops Lobster Bar, he is incorporating the use of the freshest foods possible and adding dishes from his Italian roots every now and then. He says that there is a lot of crossover between Southern American and Italian food. They aren’t threatening, but compliment one another. This attention to detail and his personal management skills make him an asset to both Chops Lobster Bar and Buckhead Life Restaurant Group.

Chops Lobster Bar is consistently rated one of the top steakhouses in the country. With such a commendable reputation to uphold, Chef Daryl is looking forward to his future with Chops Lobster Bar. He hopes to make each dining experience better than the last, leaving each guest with a desire to return. Chef Daryl’s commitment to improve upon an already impeccable restaurant ensures that the future of Chops Lobster Bar is in secure hands.

Chef Daryl enjoys spending time with his son, Calvin. In his leisure time he enjoys gardening and teaching cooking classes. He is also involved with a number of charitable causes.

###

