

'The food here scares people'

Hot Chef. Jon Cichon of Lacroix talks about being upscale, but not stuck up.

The face of Lacroix's kitchen, at the posh Rittenhouse Hotel, is executive chef Jon Cichon, who's been at the elegant restaurant for several years. You might also recognize him from his demos at COOK, or his participation in collaborative chef dinners and food competitions. We spoke with Cichon about fine dining and dive bars.

You were trained at Lacroix, then worked at Supper, and eventually came back to Lacroix. Are there benefits to staying put at a restaurant, compared to some chefs who've worked at five places in 10 years?

It's tough because sometimes I wish I would have done that, but I'm happy that I didn't. The thing about a place like Lacroix is that you have so many outlets. There have been some really notable people who have worked here and put their stamp on the restaurant. So I didn't have to leave. I saw this place



Jon Cichon / CHRISTOPHER GABELLO

Quoted

"It's not the norm for most people, and I need to remind myself of that sometimes."

Jon Cichon, on incorporating acidic ingredients like citrus and vinegar.

become five different restaurants while remaining true to its core.

You've participated in plenty of multi-chef dinners and competitions like Hop Chef. Are these for fun or is it still work?

It's definitely still work, but there's a fun aspect to it for sure. The whole goal – besides being fun – is to bring people to the restaurant. I do it to expose people to the food here and to make myself seem more accessible. I think the food here scares people sometimes. They have this idea of it being super fancy and hoity-toity. But there is no pretentious vibe here. That's what's changing with food and fine dining: You can have fancy food served in a way that's not stuck up.

Since you are around this elevated food, do you have a favorite dive bar for after work?

I like a lot of dives. I like Loco Pez, I tend to frequent that place a lot. I live right around the corner, and I like that it's easy and cheap and I can get food late.

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