



Gavin Kaysen

There is nothing quite like the frenetic and fleeting seasonality of the upper Midwest to inspire a soulful cook. For Chef Gavin Kaysen, an old soul at heart, this idea beckoned him back home to Minneapolis to open Spoon and Stable, a 2015 James Beard Award Finalist for Best New Restaurant, in the North Loop neighborhood in fall 2014. “Cooking is very emotional for me; I have to cook how I feel,” Kaysen says. “There’s something to be said for how you feel emotionally as one season gives way to the next, when it snows, rains, or is sunny. I never thought about that growing up here, but coming back, I see that now.”

Even though the award-winning chef has cooked in top kitchens throughout the U.S. and Europe, Kaysen gravitates most toward traditional Heartland dishes—the kind he grew up eating and cooking. “I love the classics. Starting with my grandmother, we always cooked very classical American dishes, like pot roast and chicken. I’m taking the knowledge I have now to shift, change, and morph those at Spoon and Stable.”

The chef refined his dexterity in contemporary American fine dining by dedicating time to some of the world’s best restaurants. After graduating in 2001 from the New England Culinary Institute in Montpelier, VT, Kaysen worked at Domaine Chandon in Yountville, CA; L’Auberge de



Lavaux in Lausanne, Switzerland; and the famed L'Escargot in London, before becoming executive chef at El Bizcocho in San Diego, where he was named one of *Food & Wine* magazine's Best New Chefs. In late 2007, he joined Chef Daniel Boulud as chef de cuisine of Café Boulud in New York City, where he later earned the James Beard Rising Star Chef award and a coveted Michelin star. While there, he discovered so much more than tangible, technical skills. "It was like getting my master's and PhD with Daniel and his organization," he explains. "I learned so much about hospitality, about the business, cooking—but more importantly, I learned a lot about soulful food. When he cooks, it's all about spontaneity, which I have discovered is how I really thrive, too."

Today, Kaysen helps the next generation of young culinarians refine their skills in the kitchen. He is one of the founding mentors of the nonprofit ment'or BKB Foundation (formerly Bocuse d'Or USA Foundation), for which he currently serves as Team USA's head coach in preparing for the famed biennial culinary competition that showcases the world's best up-and-coming chefs. Kaysen brings an intimate knowledge of the Bocuse d'Or competition, as he proudly represented the U.S. in 2007. In 2015, he successfully led Team USA to a record-breaking Second Place victory, the first medal and podium placement for the United States. 2015 set the stage for future success, and in 2017 Team USA claimed first place for the very first time.

Bellecour, Kaysen's second restaurant, opened in spring 2017. The French bistro is a nod to his friends and mentors Chefs Daniel Boulud and Paul Bocuse, as well as their time spent together in Lyon, France.

Kaysen lives in Minneapolis with his wife and two sons. In his spare time, he tends to the strawberries, peppers, zucchini, cilantro, basil, thyme, rosemary, and tomatoes growing in his home garden.