

Focus on Farming Conference III

Chef Biographies



Charles Ramseyer - Swiss-born, Charles Ramseyer, Executive Chef for Ray's Boathouse, Café & Catering, discovered his love of cooking as a teenager and apprenticed at the exclusive Hotel Vorderen Sternen in Zurich. He traveled the world by the time he was 20 and in 1980 immigrated to Vancouver B.C., first working for Hilton Hotels and then the Four Seasons. Charles became known for combining experimental flavors with his classic culinary expertise as Executive Chef at Seattle's four-star Alexis Hotel. In 1993, Ray's Boathouse lured him to its breathtaking Puget Sound restaurant where he continues to cultivate his passion for deliciously simple and unusual pairings of Pacific Northwest ingredients. He has traveled extensively throughout the United States and internationally on invitation to cook at the best restaurants and hotels. Charles has been Guest Chef at the James Beard House three times, Disney's Epcot Center twice, and was named one of "America's Most Inventive Fish Chefs" by Wine Spectator, March 2004. After many years of studying and hard work, Charles proudly received his U.S. citizenship on July 13, 2006.



Holly Smith - launched Cafe Juanita in April of 2000 with an adventurous menu and a flourishing garden in a charming Kirkland rambler. Her passion for northern Italian cuisine continues to bring her rave reviews from local and national media, including a 2005 and 2006 nomination from the prestigious James Beard Foundation Awards for the *American Express Best Chef Northwest/Hawaii*, and inclusion in the October 2006 issue of Gourmet Magazine as one of America's Top 50 Restaurants. Originally from Maryland, Holly came to the Northwest in 1993 and began her Seattle culinary career at the Pike Place Market's Place Pigalle. After serving four years as sous chef for Tom Douglas at the Dahlia Lounge and helping to launch Brasa with Chef Tamara Murphy, Holly fulfilled a lifelong dream when she opened Cafe Juanita.

Johnathan Sundstrom - opened Lark in December 2003 on Seattle's Capitol Hill, with his wife, JM Enos and partner Kelly Ronan. An artisan focused restaurant with about 50 seats, Lark is open only for dinner. John adheres to Slow Food principles, sourcing ingredients and products with a European sensibility using regional American farmers, cheese makers, ranchers and wineries. John will be working with Armandino Batali, custom creating signature salumi for Lark, such as Wild Boar Proscuitto, and Lark's own pancetta. After formal training at the New England Culinary Institute, John trained in Japanese cuisine and sushi. After graduating from culinary school, John spent the next few years working in some of the country's finest resort hotels, including; the 5-star Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel, Club XIX at the Lodge at Pebble Beach and Stein Ericksen Lodge. He moved to

Seattle in 1991, worked at *raison d'etre*, *Campagne*, and *Café Sport*, learning about local ingredients and meeting northwest farmers and foragers. He cooked at *Dahlia Lounge*, was promoted to sous chef within a year, and named chef a year later, working closely with owner Tom Douglas developing the restaurant to one of national prominence. In 1999, a working tour took him to New York and San Francisco, and he returned to Seattle with a renewed sense of purpose, new ideas and techniques, and a greater understanding of excellence. In 2000, he happily reintroduced fish and meat to his repertoire when he took over at *Earth & Ocean*, and within six months John was named one of *Food & Wine Magazine's* Best New Chef's for 2001. In the 3 years that John was chef at *Earth & Ocean*, the restaurant thrived.

John has been featured on the TVFood Network's "Best of" Show and Bobby Flay's "Food Nation." John was one of 13 top chefs featured in the PBS original series "Chefs a-field," which was nominated for a James Beard Award in 2003. In May of 2005, John was nominated for "Best Chef Northwest/Hawaii" by the James Beard Foundation.

Michael Felsenstein - is the Executive Chef and Food and Beverage Director at the Lynnwood Convention Center. A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park New York, he has worked in fine dining restaurants and four star hotels in New Orleans, New York and Chicago. Michael oversaw the day to day restaurant and catering operations for the Experience Music Project prior to joining the Lynnwood Convention Center staff.



Russell Lowell is the executive chef and owner of Russell Dean Lowell Premier Catering and three distinguished venues in the greater Seattle area: *Eleven~Eleven* on Lake Union, the *Garden Café* at *Molbak's* in Woodinville, and his latest opening—*Russell's*—a rustic-elegant restaurant and full bar located in Bothell. Russell began cooking with a master French chef at the age of 15. He traveled and worked in numerous high end restaurants before becoming the executive chef at *Daniel's Broiler* on Lake Union for six years. In 1994 he opened *Lowell-Hunt Catering*. 12 years later, *Russell Dean Lowell Premier Catering* has grown into one of Seattle's most notable and celebrated companies. Russell's engaging personality, support of community and charity, and his drive to make every experience exceptional makes him one of the most sought after chefs.