

Chef puts a Wisconsin stamp on Devon Seafood's fare at Bayshore Town Center

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Fork. Spoon. Life. Anthony Clark



(Photo: Devon Seafood + Steak)

Anthony Clark has always wanted to be in the kitchen. His earliest memories include his first attempts at cooking, when he was just a preschooler.

His first job was as a dishwasher at Linden Inn on Big Cedar Lake, and when he got the chance to work the line he jumped right in and never looked back.

Since December, he's been the executive chef at [Devon Seafood + Steak](#) at Bayshore Town Center, and one of his proudest menu additions includes a traditional Wisconsin fish fry made from scratch

every week.

Clark, 42, is a graduate of Waukesha County Technical College's culinary program and has worked at Old Courthouse Inn, Bravo Cucina Italiana, McCormick & Schmick's and Mason Street Grill. He lives in Wauwatosa.

What makes it worth it

This will sound corny, but it is the dead honest truth. I'm living the dream. This is what I've always wanted to do, and not everybody can do that.

An ingredient he can't live without

I'm on a big lime kick right now. You can do a lot of different things with limes. There's a spectrum of spicy, sweet, savory.

Favorite thing to make

Homemade pizza, to me there is nothing better. It doesn't have to be a standard sausage and mushroom, you can do breakfast pizza or dessert pizza.

Getting started

I've always wanted to cook. Every kid wants to be a football or baseball player, sure, but I always wanted to be a chef. This is the only "real" job that I've always wanted.

I'd watch my mom and grandma in the kitchen. That's how it started. My mom's favorite story to tell people is my first cooking experience.

My dad was sleeping, mom was at work. I knew the oatmeal had to go in a pot. I was too little and too weak to lift the pot. I was about 3. I had seen mom do this often enough, but I couldn't get the pot up there.

I asked my brother for help. He said no.

I took a plastic Star Wars cup, put milk, oatmeal and butter in there. I put it on the stovetop and I turned on the burner. It just melted. I didn't know what to do. My dad grabbed me and pulled me away, I don't remember anything after that. That's my first cooking experience.

Early adventures

I got hired as a dishwasher at Linden Inn, my first job. My brother was a prep cook. Later I was doing prep, came in on a Friday to work right after football practice. The chef said get yourself a tong and towels, you're frying tonight. It was a buffet. I just kept moving.

That's where I developed my mindset. To this day, I always feel you stay ahead or you fall behind. The minute you're stagnant, you fall behind. In the kitchen, one of the biggest things is always thinking about the next step.

Seafood or steak?

Red-blooded American male here, so steak all day every day. But here's the thing, if I'm at home making something to eat, I'm making steak. But if I'm going out and feel I want to be healthy, I'm doing fish.

I do enjoy fish, but I'm very particular about the seafood I eat. The creative side of me prefers a piece of fish because there are so many choices. Steak, you can have different cuts and cooking techniques, but red meat is red meat.

Fish or seafood gets underplayed

Cobia. I think it is fantastic. It is not prevalent, it is not good frozen. Yet it is not expensive, and it is relatively new as far as the market.

Especially in Wisconsin, we are a meat and potatoes community. We are the Midwest, and we want stuff we know and trust. We order salmon, tuna, walleye, perch, as opposed to cobia.

Also try Opah or Moonfish, which are the same thing. Imagine mahi and swordfish having a baby — that's the texture, the taste, very mild but meaty.

Fish fry fan

We actually have a fish fry (at Devon) because of me being a Wisconsin boy. Our vice president, Lou, is from Kansas City. When I first started here, we were talking about the fish fry.



Chef Anthony Clark added a Wisconsin fish fry to the menu at Devon Seafood, complete with potato pancakes, slaw and rye bread. (Photo: Devon Seafood + Steak)

He was like what's on a fish fry? French fries, coleslaw, tartar sauce, potato pancakes and rye bread. He said what do they do with the rye bread? They eat it, Lou. He had no idea. So if you come here, it is indeed a real Wisconsin fish fry now. I make everything from scratch, tartar sauce, coleslaw, everything except for the rye bread.

Kids in the kitchen

I love working in the kitchen with my daughter, Annabelle, 9. The first thing we made together was blueberry pie ice cream. In the summertime, we alternate. She picks something one week and the next week I pick something. We're making sherbets and sorbets and ice creams now. She's getting pretty good at it.

Milwaukee mentor

Mark Weber is No. 1. I worked at Mason street Grill for two years. Mark Weber is that old-school-type chef, and Mason Street was probably my favorite job I've ever had, because every day I went in that place I learned something new.

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